

Buddism, Life of Gotama
1889.



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Of the three groups into which we have thus distinguished the biographical data of the Pitakas, there is little doubt that the oldest is the great passage in the Maha Vagga,¹ about the opening of the Buddha's teaching career; that the account of the closing scenes in the Parinibbana Sutta is much later,² and that of the scattered notices some are nearly as old as the former, and some more recent even than the latter.

But it is impossible at present to discriminate these dates with certainty. I shall therefore place before the reader the Pitaka biography as it would be constructed on the assumption that all parts of the Pitakas are of equal authority. It may conveniently be divided into five sections. I shall not refrain, however, from indicating from time to time what I think the traces of a variety of date among the elements of the Pitaka books themselves.

§ 1.³ In the days of Bimbisara, king of Magadha, or shortly before his time, *Gotama was born, the son of Suddhodana of Kapilavatthu in the Sakyan country*⁴

His mother died in his infancy, and he was nursed by

*Mahapapati.*⁵ The Sakyan clan was a noble and powerful one, and Gotama's of the purest Khat-

likely the stamp of high antiquity.

¹ Probably later. Oldenberg, *Buddha*, p. 115, and others.
² The sources utilised are those founded on the Vinaya, which quotation is given for each event or detail, but as a rule early dates are given in very many places. The exception is the visit of Asoka, which as far as I know, only in the passage quoted (Sutt. Nip. 10. 100) which it occurs bears every mark of an early date.

³ Maha Vagga, i. 54. 1.

tiya¹ race on both father's and mother's side.² The knowledge of his birth was made known by rejoicing deities to a hermit named Asita, who thereon repaired to Siddhodana's palace, saw the child in his glory, surrounded by deities, etc., and announced to the Sakyans that the child was to be a Buddha.³ The young man grew up in the midst of wealth and ease:⁴ he had (according to the conventional description of luxury) three palaces, one for each of the seasons.⁵ But he sometimes considered the sadness and inevitable approach of old age and death,⁶ and under the influence of such thoughts, while still in the prime of youth and beauty *he left his home*⁷ (as many older than he, but few so young and happy, had done), his father and mother weeping as he went; *his father's heart pierced with excessive grief, leaving his wife and his son Rahula behind.*⁸

He became the pupil of two wise teachers, Alara Kalama and Uddaka Ramaputta;⁹ and afterwards the companion in austerities of five mendicants in the neighbourhood of Benares.¹⁰ The details of his austerities are given in conventional descriptions as of unequalled severity: he starved himself, remained in one position, held his breath till his frame was attenuated to the utmost imaginable degree and his strength

¹ Digh. Nik. vi.

² His feet were marked with a mystic wheel (Angut., iv. 36), and he had the thirty-two marks of a 'great one' on his person.

³ Sutt. Nip. iii. 11.

⁴ Digh. Nik. iv. 6, etc.

⁵ Maj. Nik. 75.

⁶ Sanyut. Nik. xii. 10. 2.

⁷ Maj. Nik. iv.

⁸ Maha Vagga, i. 54. 5

⁹ Maha Vagga, i. 54. 2.

¹⁰ Maha Vagga, i. 6. 1.

¹¹ Maha Vagga, i. 6. 10.

was entirely exhausted.¹ *At last he saw the uselessness of such austerities, and, to the indignation of the free mendicants, gave them up.*² We are not told what led him to the more successful method, but so it was, that *sitting one night under the tree which thenceforth was called the Buddha tree*³ (of this age, other ages and other Buddhas had other trees), and there practising meditation according to the method which he afterwards taught, or asking himself, as all Buddhas had done before him, whence is death, etc.,⁴ *he arrived at perfect insight, as he believed, into the nature and cause of sorrow and the way of destroying it. He was then Buddha, the Buddha of the age. He had attained, unaided, and by direct insight and conscious realisation, the saving truth for the benefit of gods and men.*

This is the first chapter of the life, the history of the first Buddha days. On this it is to be observed that the story as thus extracted from the older group of authorities, contains, so far, no point of likeness to the recorded life of Jesus Christ. The nearest approach to any such thing is the prognostication by Asita of the child's future career. This belongs to the familiar class of stories which tell of signs accompanying the birth of famous men; and it takes its particular shape from the visit of the astrologer—which is still

¹ Maj. Nik. 12.

² Maha Vagga, i. 6. 10.

³ *Passim*. The account in Maj. Nik. iv. differs a little from others.

⁴ Sanyut. Nik. xii. 4. 9.; varying a little from *passim*, Angut. iv. 21.

almost universal among the Sinhalese—to prepare the horoscope of a new-born child.¹

It will also be observed that the whole of the elaborate details of the 'Great Renunciation,' as Europeans have called it, are wanting: the four signs, the sleeping babe, the flying horse, and the rest. One feature which has been woven into that legend does occur in the *Maha Vagga*,—the scene of the sleeping women in their uncomely disorder,—but it occurs not in reference to Gotama but to another person. Further, the temptation by Māra, in the shape and meaning which it bears in the later story,² is altogether absent. There is no hint of any appeal made either to the lust or the fears of the hero; there is neither tempest nor siren. The crisis through which Gotama is represented as having passed is one of intellectual insight—not of moral choice.

The materials of the biography up to this point have been brought together, as the references show, from many different passages, scattered about the books. The events of the second period, that of the founding of the Community, are more systematically recorded in the first book of the *Maha Vagga*. I give the substance of its chief contents.

¹ The visit of Asita is not mentioned by Professor Oldenberg among the points contained in the oldest tradition, but whatever be the date of the *Sutta* which contains it, it certainly belongs to the older cycle of traditions.

² The contrast between the poetical development and the prose of the 'canonical' books is well drawn out by Professor Oldenberg, *Buddha*, pp. 102-105.

³ To this book is prefixed, as introduction, an account of the first events after Gotama's attaining Buddhahood down to the conversion of his two chief disciples, Sāriputta and Moggallāna (i. 24). Among the elements of

§ 2. For seven days the newly 'enlightened' one, the blessed Buddha, sat under the tree of enlightenment, the Bodhi-tree (in Sinhalese 'Bo'-tree) enjoying the bliss of emancipation,—thoroughly experiencing it and penetrating its meaning. At the end of these seven days¹ the series of causes which lead to suffering was clear to him in its details. During each of the three watches of the night he reviewed the series, and pronounced his solemn sense that all doubt was dispelled, and the true nature of things was clear.² The hosts of Mara were scattered, as clouds are scattered by the sun.³ Next, for seven days, he sat in like trance under another tree, where he pronounced, in answer to an arrogant Brahman who accosted him, the characteristics of a true Brahman—purity, self-control, knowledge, and holy life. For a third seven days, he sat under a third tree, sheltered by the coils and hood of a mystic serpent, who at the end of the time appeared as a young man and did reverence to the Buddha, and elicited from him this declaration of the nature of

historical or legendary character with which, in the Vinaya Pitaka, the discussion of the monastic discipline is interwoven, this account occupies by far the first place, both in extent and in importance, for it contains the oldest version accessible to us now, and most probably, for ever, of what the Buddhist fraternity deemed to be the history of their master's life in its most important period.—Rhys Davids and Oldenberg, *Sacred Books of the East*, xiii. 73 n.

¹ Or during each night of these.—See Rhys Davids, p. 75.

² It was in the first watch that he uttered what is really the earliest Buddha utterance (as Buddhaghosha admits 'some said'): 'Verily when things as they are become clear to the Brahman in ardent meditation, then all his doubts depart, as he knows things in their reality and their causes.' The famous verse, 'Aneka-jāṭisaṃsāram,' etc., is a later composition.

³ This is the only reference here to Māra, and he is evidently here an opponent rather than a tempter; an adversary in an intellectual rather than in a moral struggle. Here is the germ of the later legend of his elaborate attack.

happiness : ' Happy is the solitude of him who is full of joy, who has learnt the Truth, who sees (the Truth). Happy is freedom from malice in this world, self-restraint towards all beings that have life. Happy is freedom from lust in this world, getting beyond all desires ; the putting away of that pride which comes from the thought " I am " ! This truly is the highest happiness.'¹ A fourth period of seven days was passed under a fourth tree, and there the Buddha received his first disciples. Two merchants, Tapussa and Bhallika, acting on the suggestion of a ' deity ' who had been their kinsman in a former life, offered to Gotama rice-cakes and honey. The four great gods—guardians of the four quarters of the world—provided four stone bowls, and in these the Buddha accepted and ate the offering. The two merchants then enrolled themselves as his disciples, ' taking refuge ' in the Buddha and in the Doctrine. There was as yet no ' Community '—the third ' precious object ' of faith—so their peculiar form of profession (the two-fold) marked the first stage in the erection of the system.

Gotama then arose out of that state of meditation in which he had passed these four weeks, and returned to the second of the four trees. There, we read, the thought occurred to him, ' I have acquired this knowledge, but it is deep and difficult, and mankind are shallow and given up to desires ; they will

¹ *Maha Vagga*, i. 3. 4. This and other translations marked *S.B.E.* are quoted from *Sacred Books of the East*, etc. : for the rest the present author is responsible. But most of the quotations for which no exact reference is given are freely abridged ; when the quotation is literal, the reference is given.

not understand me ; why should I weary myself with teaching it?' For a while this idea possessed him, and he gave utterance to it in a stanza which was *anything but inspired*.¹ There is no reference in the *Maha Vagga* to Mara as having suggested this idea, it was 'only too natural,' and arose of itself in the mind of Gotama. But in the Sutta which records Gotama's last days, a late Sutta, though of the older cycle, he is made to say, that at the time of his attaining Buddhahood Mara tried to tempt him instead of preaching to enter Nirvana at once—to be what another development of the idea called 'a Buddha for himself alone'.

For a moment the hopes of the world's blessing hung in suspense. But the great lord of all the gods, the supreme Brahma, saw the danger, and came himself to entreat the Buddha not to withhold the doctrine. 'There are,' he urged, 'some beings with eyes so purged from the dust of desire as to be able to apprehend it ; open the door to them ; look down from the height of truth on the perishing multitude, and pity them.'² Thrice he urged his petition before the Buddha could be persuaded ; but at last Gotama looked abroad with his Buddha-eyes and saw that it was so ; there were some beings, like lotus flowers, emerging in different measures from the water, on the petals of some of the uppermost of which not a drop

¹ The translators leave 'anacchariya' untranslated (*Sacred Books of the East*, l.c.) but I follow the Sinhalese tradition in rendering it 'non-supernatural,' which is believed to be the meaning of the commentary 'anu-acchariya'.

² Contrast Lucretius, ii. 1.

of water hangs—beings clear in different measures from the dust of desire; and he granted the great deity's earnest prayer. Brahma did homage and disappeared.

In spite of the supernatural embellishments of this story, what strikes one most in it is its human naturalness.

The same naïveté characterises the next event. 'To whom,' thought the new Buddha, 'shall I first preach? Who will be able to understand?' And he thought at once of his two old friends, 'Alāra Kālāma and Uddaka Rāmaputta, his companions in his earliest asceticism, both men of noble nature. But deities informed him that they had but lately died.¹ Next his mind turned to the five mendicants who had afterwards been his companions in austerity, and who had done much for him; and perceiving, by supernatural vision, that they were living in the deer-park at Benares, he started thither.

This was a moment, as later Buddhism looked back to it, of central importance. For to those five mendicants in the deer-park Isipatana, the first sermon, or exposition of the law, was to be addressed. It reckons, along with the moment of Buddhahood and the moment of final Nirvana, as one of the three great epochs of every Buddha's career. It is in accordance with this view of the expedi-

¹ I cannot sympathise with those controversialists who urge this ignorance of the death of these two men as fatal to Gotama's claims. It is of course an admission that he was not literally, at all times and of all matters, omniscient; but an admission more creditable than damaging.

tion to Benares that the episode which follows finds place.

On the road to Benares, Gotama fell in with a member of one of the sects of naked ascetics, Upaka by name, himself a hermit and a seeker after truth; and Upaka said to him: 'Your countenance, friend, is serene; your complexion is pure and bright. In whose name, friend, have you retired from the world? Who is your teacher? Whose doctrine do you profess?'¹ The reply was a proud one: 'I follow no teacher. I have overcome all foes and all stains; I am superior to all men and to all gods: I am the absolute Buddha. And I am going now to Benares to set in motion the Wheel of the Law, as a king the triumphant wheel of his kingdom. I am the Conqueror.' Upaka replied, 'It may be so;' but shook his head, and went his way.

Gotama went on to the deer-park at Benares. When his five former companions saw him coming, they agreed among themselves to show by their way of receiving him that they regarded him as one who had fallen away from his high aspirations and ascetic efforts, and had returned to the pleasures of an easy life. They would not, they agreed, salute him or rise or take his bowl. But as he drew near an overmastering impulse led them to break their compact. They rose to meet him; one took his bowl, another brought water to wash his feet, and so on. But they addressed him by his old name in the old way.

¹ *Maha Vagga*, i. 6. 7; *S.B.E.* xiii.

When they spoke to him thus, he replied: 'Do not address the Tathāgata¹ by his name, and with the appellation "Friend." The Tathagata, O Bhikkhus, is the holy absolute Sambuddha. Give ear, O Bhikkhus! The immortal (Amata) has been won (by me). I will teach you: to you I preach the doctrine. If you walk in the way I show you, you will ere long have penetrated to the truth, having yourselves known and seen it face to face; and you will live in the possession (even in this life)² of that highest goal of the holy life, for the sake of which noble youths fully give up the world and go forth into the homeless state.' To this the five replied: 'By austerities such as you practised with us, you did not obtain this insight; how much less is it likely that you have done so in a life of ease?' Gotama repudiated the charge of having returned to a life of ease, and repeated his proud assertion. The monks replied as before, and a second time the Buddha made the same answer. They repeated their doubts a third time, and then Gotama challenged them to say whether he had ever, in old days, spoken to them in such terms of self-assertion. They admitted that he had not; and he proceeded to lay down his fundamental principles. Neither the extreme of indulgence nor the extreme of austerity, but the middle way between these two has led him

¹ A title of the Buddha, which is variously explained. In these pages it is frequently represented by 'Buddha.'

² *Dittheva dhamme*.—*Maha Vagga*, i. 6. 12. The phrase seems to be omitted in *S.B.E.* xiii., whence the rest of the passage is quoted.

to insight and wisdom. This middle way, which leads to calm, to knowledge, to Nirvana, is the holy Eightfold Path of right belief, right aim, right speech, right conduct, right livelihood, right endeavour, right recollectedness, right meditation.¹

Next he propounds the 'Four Noble Truths.' 'This, O Bhikkhus, is the noble truth of Suffering; birth is suffering; decay is suffering; illness is suffering; death is suffering; presence of objects we hate is suffering; separation from objects we love is suffering; not to obtain what we desire is suffering; briefly, the five-fold clinging to existence is suffering.

'This, O Bhikkhus, is the noble truth of the Cause of suffering: thirst, that leads to re-births, accompanied by pleasure and lust, finding its delight here and there. (This thirst is threefold), namely, thirst for pleasure, thirst for existence, thirst for prosperity.²

'This, O Bhikkhus, is the noble truth of the Cessation of suffering: (it ceases with) the complete cessation of this thirst—a cessation which consists in the absence of every passion—with the abandoning of this thirst; with the doing away with it, with the deliverance from it, with the destruction of desire.

'This, O Bhikkhus, is the noble truth of the Path which leads to the cessation of suffering; that holy

¹ On this Eightfold Path, often mentioned, but seldom or never worked out further, see p. 130.

² Or, according to a rendering of the word which is preferred by the Sinhalese: 'thirst of annihilation.' This some interpret 'desire for what is unattainable—cessation of existence at the end of the present life, not by Nirvana, but by ordinary death.' But see p. 118 n.

Eightfold Path¹—that is to say, right belief, right aim, right speech, right conduct, right livelihood, right endeavour, right recollectedness, right meditation.

‘The first principle, the fact of suffering, must be *understood*; the cause, desire, must be *abandoned*; the third principle, that of the cessation of suffering by the cessation of the cause, must be *seen face to face*, the Path must be *practically realised*.

‘Now these things,’ said Gotama, ‘I have done; I have realised these truths and passed along this path. When I knew myself to have done so, I knew that I was free; that my freedom could never be lost;² that this is my last birth; that I cannot be born again.’

The five monks were delighted; and one of them, Kondañña, gained at once a clear view of the principle that, ‘whatever has a beginning tends necessarily to an end.’ The lower deities of the earth shouted in applause, ‘The kingdom of truth has been founded;’ the four great deities and all their train shouted. The shout was passed on from one world of divine beings to another, till it reached the Brahma-world; and then the whole ten thousand worlds were shaken with a mighty shock; and a light, greater than that of the deities, filled the universe.

So was the Wheel of Doctrine set revolving.³

¹ Maha Vagga, i. 6. 19-22, S.B.E. In the rest of this quotation I have ceased to follow exactly the *Sacred Books of the East*. The two sentences which follow are an abridgment.

² Or ‘disturbed’?

³ In this favourite phrase there is probably a union of two allusions. The Wheel had, probably, been long a symbol of doctrine. The Buddhists as-

This discourse (called the Sutta of the Rolling Forth of the Wheel of Doctrine) is not so much an exposition as a concise assertion of the principles of the Buddha. As an event it is famous; and as the first sermon it is often referred to. With the phrase 'Middle Way,' in the meaning which it bears here, we do not meet often in the Pītakas.¹ The Eightfold way is constantly referred to, but very rarely, and never completely, explained.² It is in the Four Truths that the kernel of Buddhism is to be found; but they are the statement in a popular form, as I suppose, of the Chain of Causation and of its bearing on life.

At this point ends, in our books, the first section or recitation-portion of the Maha Vagga. The division is, no doubt, made as a rule with a view to the length of the sections, not to their contents; but in the present instance, it corresponds with a well-marked point in the narrative.³ Thus far the narrative has been, as the reader must have observed, connected, progressive, and uniform in literary tone. It is marked by picturesqueness and simplicity, and by the absence—except for obvious embellishments—

sociated with this the idea of a universal monarch, whose kingdom was symbolised by his royal chariot-wheel rolling throughout the world. I am no lover of sun-myth theories; but I think this latter idea may be traceable to the chariot of the sun.—See Rhys Davids, *Hibbert Lectures*, p. 129 seq.

¹ In Maj. Nik. 3, an important Sutta, it is identified with the Eightfold Way. It occurs sometimes in the sense of a middle way between assertion and denial of metaphysical dogmas.

² See p. 130. The early part of Sut. Nīpat. (see especially Nāḷaka Sutta) is connected with the idea of the Wheel of Doctrine.

³ The order is thenceforward that of the rules of the Community; and such biographical fragments as occur are introduced without note of time, to account for the promulgation of the rules.

of the improbable. The steps by which the Thinker found himself the centre of a Community have been so far clearly traced.

§ 3. From this point, though not with any sudden transition, the narrative loses these characteristics. The next three recitation-portions have reference to events which must have followed close upon those we have repeated—the conversion of a number of distinguished laymen, and of some women, of a number of fire-worshippers, of the king, and of two chief disciples—but even in these we no longer find the consecutiveness, and the freedom from exaggeration; and from the end of the fourth recitation-portion onwards the narrative order is lost altogether.

Although Tapussa and Bhallika, the two mendicants who offered the first food to the new Buddha, were the first persons to take refuge in him and his teaching, they were only lay hearers: Kondanna (now called Aññatakondañña, from his recognition of the doctrine) was the first to attain full knowledge, and to be associated with Gotama in his Order. Kondanna was at once received to both steps, initiation and full profession, his application for them being welcomed with the formula, 'Come, mendicants; the doctrine is well spoken: lead the religious life for complete extinction of sorrow.'¹ The rest of the five ascetics were soon converted, and

¹ This formula, expressly welcoming an applicant, has been considered parallel to the call of Christ's disciples by the words, 'Follow Me.' This is a fair specimen of such parallels.

grasped the fundamental principles, and arrived at complete detachment from desire and from identifying themselves with anything; thus reaching the state of *Rahats*, or perfect beings, who had no other existence to look forward to, who had indeed (though the phrase has not yet made its appearance in the system) secured Nirvana, already possessed it in a partial sense, and were secure of it in the full sense at death. There was thus a Community of six, and they all *Rahats*; for Gotama himself was reckoned as one among the rest.¹

The story of Yasa, which comes next, though it is not part, except incidentally, of the biography of Gotama, deserves to be somewhat fully quoted here, for a peculiar reason. It has been adopted by the later biographers² as model for part of their history of Gotama himself. Yasa was a noble youth delicately nurtured, with the extreme of luxury—a palace for each of the seasons, and so on. In the four rainy months, he never stirred from the palace in which he enjoyed the society of a number of female musicians. One night, however, he happened to be restless, and arose and looked into the hall where these ladies were sleeping. The scene revolted him. One had her hair in disorder; another had spittle flowing from her mouth; others were

¹ *Maha Vagga*, i. 6 *fn.*

² *Jataka Commentary*, *Lalita Vistara*, Bigandet, *Life of Gaudama*, referred to by Rhys Davids here; and see Arnold's *Light of Asia*, p. 83, a passage, the elaborate sensuousness of which is a remarkable comment on the title '*Lalita Vistara*.'

muttering in their sleep; all their charms were gone; it was 'more like a cemetery.' The worthlessness, the dangerousness of their life came home to him: he felt that sacred 'disgust' which is the spring (according to Buddhism) of religious endeavours, and thereupon he left his home and entered on the homeless state. His departure was facilitated by supernatural agencies; the gates of the palace and of the city were opened by no human hand.

Yasa found his way straight to the deer-park, where the Buddha was; and was welcomed by him, and soon grasped the great fundamental principle that whatever has an origin must necessarily tend to decay. His father, coming to seek him, came also under the Buddha's influence, and became a lay disciple, taking 'refuge' in the Buddha, the Doctrine and the Community; while Yasa himself became a full member of the Community, and the seventh Rahat.

This story differs in some significant details from those which preceded it; and is evidently, I think, a later composition. It is full of technical expressions; the instruction given to Yasa is on the conventional lines of instruction to laymen; and a rather irrelevant miracle is performed—the Buddha rendering Yasa invisible while his father is instructed.

The devotion of Yasa was followed by that of four other noblemen, who were converted by precisely the same course. They were followed by fifty more; to all of whom exactly the same instructions were ad-

dressed with exactly the same results. All became Rahats, of whom there were now sixty-one.¹

The dispersion of the members of the Community—now sixty, besides the Buddha—is next recorded. Using the formula which became the conventional description of his own purpose, he said:—‘Go forth, mendicants, on your rounds, for the good of the many; for the welfare of the many; for the good, the gain, and the welfare of gods and men. Let no two go the same way.’² Gotama himself took a course of his own. The dispersion of the Community is represented as the cause of a great many men coming from different countries and from great distances to Gotama, to be received into the Community, by the lower and higher stages, of admission and of full profession. The inconvenience of this led to the regulation that the members of the order might themselves, without coming to Gotama, admit new members to the two steps of Pabbajjā (entrance on religious life) and Upasampada (perfect membership); and the exact ceremonies and words to be used were then appointed.

Whether it is due to the importance of this event, or only to accident and the compiler’s awkwardness, the chapter which contains this institution of the form of admission is preceded and followed by two passages which narrate, almost in identical terms, a

¹ The wooden dullness of all this is in striking contrast to the variety of the earlier section.

² This has been considered parallel to Our Lord’s sending the Seventy two by two.

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sort of attack of Mara, the adversary, upon the Buddha.¹ Mara approaches him, and says: 'Thou art bound by fetters, and canst not escape me.' Gotama replies: 'I am delivered from all fetters, from all desires; thou art defeated.'

With no more relevance next comes the story of the conversion and admission (in exactly the same form as we have had above) of thirty more rich young men.

The next incident in the book, though there is no note of time to mark its chronological position, is the conversion, after a series of miracles, of a thousand Jāṭilas or Fire-worshipping ascetics. The total number of miracles, or rather the final batch, is summed up, at the end of the passage, as having been three thousand five hundred; but they are easily classed in three groups.

Gotama went to the chief Fire-worshipper's abode, and begged to be allowed to pass the night in the building where the sacred fire was kept. It was with difficulty that he persuaded his host to allow this, because there was a very powerful and poisonous serpent in the chamber. The Buddha, however, assured him that there would be no danger, and entered. During the night the fire-room was seen filled with blaze and smoke. The serpent was sending forth all the fiery influence that he could,

¹ In my opinion, these passages are quite irrelevant, and suggested only by the reference to 'fetters' in M. V, i. 11. 1. * The story of the Jāṭilas also strikes a reader as compiled from a source different from that of the first Bhānavāra.

and the Buddha was emitting counter-blaze—that radiance or radiant influence, symbolised by the rays which surround the head of some images of Buddha, to which appeal is still made in the Buddhist chants.¹ In the morning the serpent was found a senseless form, and the mighty power of the Buddha was acknowledged. ‘Still,’ said the Jatila to himself, ‘he is not equal to me.’

The second group into which I divide these miracles touches another field of fable more familiar to Western readers. When the Jatila summoned his guest to breakfast, the Buddha said, ‘Go in, I will follow you,’ and straightway went to the spot where grows the mighty Jambu tree, which gives name to Jambudvipa (the Indian world), and brought back a fruit of it; and was in the breakfast-room before the Jatila got there. Another time he brought such and such a mystic flower from such and such a heaven.

The third group is trifling. When the Buddha wanted to wash some rags which were to form his robe, a tank to wash them in, a stone to beat them on (here, at least, is a touch of nature only too familiar to dwellers in Indian lands), and other conveniences for washing, were supernaturally provided. And when five hundred of the Fire-worshippers were trying to split five hundred sticks, to light five hundred fires, and the like, they were supernaturally prevented from doing so, or enabled to succeed, according to

¹ The range of meaning of this word ‘tejo,’ from ‘fire’ and ‘splendour,’ to something very like ‘moral influence,’ suggests an interesting inquiry.

the will of the Buddha. It is by reckoning the number of these sticks in each case that the number of miracles is made so large.

The sight of these wonders induced the Fire-worshippers, who were in three companies, each led by a great teacher, to betake themselves to the Buddha and join the community of mendicants. To them he is said to have propounded a discourse on 'Burning : ' ' Everything is burning ; all the objects which strike the sense, and all the processes of sensation are burning with the fire of ignorance, desire, and all other accompaniments of decay and death. The wise man sees this, feels the religious "disgust" for all such objects, and enters the path which leads to freedom from the passions and from rebirth.' This sermon was the means of advancing the one thousand new mendicants from the position of mere members of the Community to that of Rahats.

The next event follows in proper sequence, and is probably in substance historical, however absurd some of the exaggerations which adorn it. The fame of Gotama reached the king of Magadha, King Bimbisāra. The report of his fame is expressed in words which recur constantly throughout the sacred books. The majority of those who came to learn of him or to argue with him are represented as being attracted by this same description, which it is therefore worth while to quote (*Maha Vagga*, 1. 22. 2).

'The ascetic Gotama, the Sakyan, having gone out from the Sakyans to a religious life, has come to

Rájagaha, and is dwelling there in the Laṭṭhivana garden, at the Supatitṭha shrine. Of this blessed Gotama a glorious fame is come abroad, to this effect : That he is a blessed, perfect, absolute Buddha, of full attainment in knowledge and conduct, in the perfect state of being, knowing all worlds, the unsurpassable trainer of man, the teacher of gods and men, a blessed Buddha : he it is who has seen face to face and fully learnt by his own insight (the nature of) this world of Dēvas, and Márās, and Brahmas, and the whole population of Brahmans, and ascetics, gods and men, and makes it known ;¹ he who proclaims a doctrine lovely in beginning, lovely in midst, lovely in end, with its meaning and its expression, and makes known a religious course in every way complete and pure.'

The king said, as all (in the books) say who hear the great announcement, 'Good is the sight of such like perfect ones' (Rahats). So with twelve myriads of Brahmans and householders (as a rule, householders means cultivators) Bimbisara repaired to the presence of the Buddha; and in due course, the process of instruction and conviction taking place as in former instances, eleven myriads, with the king, obtained complete insight into the principle: 'That all that is formed must be in turn dissolved;' and one myriad enrolled themselves as lay disciples.

The king announced that his wishes were now

¹ I have followed the Commentaries in this sentence. In *S.B.E.* xiii. 136 it is rendered thus: 'He makes known the Truth, which he has understood himself and seen face to face, to this world-system with its devas,' etc.

fulfilled. His great wishes from boyhood had been, first, some day to be a king ; next, that an absolute Buddha might come to his kingdom; that he might wait on the Buddha, might hear his preaching, and finally that he might understand it.

Having formally asked to be admitted 'From this day forth, while life shall last, as a follower who has gone for refuge' to the Buddha, the king begged for the honour of entertaining Gotama and his monks the next day. It was graciously granted ; and, on the morrow, attended by the thousand monks who had lately been Fire-worshippers, the Buddha entered the royal city. This entrance of Gotama into Rajagaha is a celebrated epoch in Buddhist history, and later writers exhausted the language of oriental hyperbole in describing its magnificence. The Maha Vagga is content with telling us that Sakka, king of the (lower) deities, assumed the form of a Brahman youth, and headed the procession, reciting a few verses in celebration of the event. Bimbisara, to secure the residence of the Buddha near him, made over to him the Bamboo-grove garden, for the use of him and his Community. The form of words he used was the regular formula for such presentations ; and the Buddha took occasion from the royal donation to lay down the rule for his Community : ' I allow you to receive the donation of a park.'¹

¹ The name 'Áráma,' 'park,' is of constant recurrence, and enters into many names of Buddhist properties in Ceylon, as Thupárama, Tissamaháráma, 'Dome Park,' 'Great-Tissa Park,' etc.

King Bimbisara had considerable influence with the Buddha, and it is said that it was upon his suggestion that the institution of Uposatha (Pōya days), now one of the most distinctive features of Buddhism, was adopted. It had been previously in use among the professors of other religious systems.¹ This dependence on, and readiness to be moulded by, royal patronage has always been—in Magadhā and in Ceylon—a characteristic of Buddhism. It has always thrived best as an ‘established religion;’ and the eagerness with which any appearance of government patronage is even now caught at is very curious. Buddhism is now the only ‘religion’ which is in any political sense ‘established’ in Ceylon.

The great Teacher has now collected a vast crowd of followers about him, has made provision for the continual extension of his Community, and has obtained the patronage of the king. Only one thing remains to provide for the complete organisation, of his system—the conversion of the two great disciples, Sāriputta and Mogallāna, to whom tradition assigns a part only second to that of the Buddha himself, and who are, in fact, the reputed authors of considerable portions of the ‘words of Buddha.’

These two friends were members of a large train of wandering ascetics, who followed a religious leader called Sanjaya. They had agreed together that whichever should first attain to Amata (this word means literally ‘immortal,’ then immortality, then

¹ *Maha Vagga*, ii. 1.

ambrosia, the food of immortality, and, in Buddhist language, 'final emancipation from birth') should tell the other. Sariputta happened to fall in with one of Gotama's monks, and was convinced by his dignified, and restrained deportment that he must be a saint. He chose a proper time for speaking to him, and said to him, just as the Brahman, who saw Gotama when first he became the Buddha, had said to Gotama, 'Whence have you this bright countenance? Who is your teacher? What is the doctrine you have adopted?' Assaji (for this was the young monk's name) told him who his teacher was, and stated very briefly the general drift, without the detailed expression, of the doctrine; repeated, in fact, to him the favourite lines:—

Whatever things proceed from a cause,
Of them the Buddha has stated the cause;
And what their dissolution is,
This is what the Great Ascetic teaches.

Sariputta grasped with perfect insight the principle: all that has a beginning must have an end; and thus congratulated him: 'If but that be the doctrine, you have already reached that state where there is no sorrow, the state hitherto unseen . . . ¹ through many myriads of ages of the universe.'

Moggallana soon saw in Sariputta's face the same

¹ A word, Abbhaitam, occurs here, which the translators of *Sacred Books* have not translated. It means 'arrived,' and its position in the sentence is awkward. If it is genuine the clause can only be translated, as it is by Professor Oldenberg (*Buddha*, p. 136): 'That which hath not been seen by many myriads of bygone ages hath come near to us.' One is tempted to conjecture 'abbhāsītām,' 'unspeaken,' or even 'abbhāṇitām.'

proof of clearness and gladness, and asked : ' Have you, then, attained to Amata ? ' ' I have,' he replied ; and told him exactly what he himself had heard from Assaji ; and, exactly as he had done, Mogallana recognised the principle. They went together to the Buddha, and as he saw them come, he said, calling them by their common names, not by those which became attached to them in Buddhist usage : ' There come two friends, Kolita and Upatissa ; these will be of my disciples the noblest, the happiest pair ! ' They were admitted, on their own application, to both grades—Pabbajja and Upasampada.

So numerous now were the adherents of the Buddha that the people began to complain : ' Gotama is breaking up family life ; he is leading away all Sanjaya's followers. Whom will he take next ? ' The monks told this to Gotama ; but he replied : ' This will soon pass over ; reply to their stanza of complaint by this stanza : ' The great heroes, the Tathagatas, lead men by sound doctrine. Who will murmur at the wise who lead men by sound doctrine ? '

So the people were convinced, and the complaints soon died away.

§ 4. Here ends that part of the record of Gotama's life which can be called in any sense connected. What remains is only the closing passage—in the Sutta of the Great Decease (or perhaps better, Long Sutta of the Decease) and a few scattered incidents which are reported in no chronological connection as having occurred some time within the long period (of forty-

five years) which the commentaries tell us intervened between the first preaching and the death.

It would naturally have been in the earlier part of this period¹ that Gotama paid the visit to his native place of which we have a brief but somewhat touching account in *Maha Vagga*, i. 54. In the course of his wanderings he came to Kapilavastu, and went for alms to his father *Suddhodana*'s house. There the lady, the mother² of *Rahula*, said to her boy, This is your father, *Rahula*, go and ask for your inheritance. The boy obeyed, and addressing his father said, 'Your shadow, reverend sir, is a place of bliss!' His father rose and went out; and the son followed, still crying, 'Give me my inheritance, reverend sir.' Gotama ordered *Sariputta* to admit the lad (by *Pabbajja*), and *Sariputta*, after inquiring what was the proper way of admitting a novice (*sámanera*), and the rite being duly instituted, admitted *Rahula* to the Community. *Rahula*'s hair was cut; he was clothed in the yellow robe, and was lost to his family. His grandfather *Suddhodana*³ came to the Buddha; and describing his own grief when his two sons, first Gotama himself and then his half-brother *Nanda*, entered the religious

¹ If the record is consistent it must have been within some seven years of the Bodhi tree, for *Rahula* was young enough to be the first novice, *i.e.* probably under fourteen. He must have been born before Gotama set out for the homeless life, and in that life Gotama spent at least seven years before he became Buddha.

² Gotama's wife is so described, instead of being named, because *Rahula* became a monk. Her title therefore in the record of the Community was 'Mother of *Rahula*.' There is nothing more said of her in the *Pitakas*.

³ The reader will observe how far the authors of this story are from wishing to magnify the family of Gotama, or attributing any peculiar character to his 'renunciation.' *Suddhodana*'s grief seems to have been greater at *Rahula*'s loss than at that of Gotama.

life, he begged that it might be a rule henceforth that no son should be admitted without his parents' consent. 'Lord,' he said, 'when the blessed one went forth it was no small grief to me, so when Nanda did, very great is it now that Rahula has done so. The love of a son cuts the skin, having cut the skin it cuts the hide, it cuts (in like order) into the flesh, the sinews, the bones, the marrow! It would be well, Lord, if their reverences admitted no son without the consent of his father and his mother.'¹ And the Buddha made it a rule accordingly.

Of incidents said to have occurred in the course of the Buddha's teaching the texts as well as the commentaries are full, since almost every discourse has to be prefaced with some account of the occasion on which it was delivered. In the commentaries and Jataka stories these incidents are numerous and varied, and some of them are interesting; but they do not come within our present scope, since there is no evidence that they were attached to Gotama till many centuries after his death. To this class belong, for instance, the story of his sympathy for the young woman to whom he recommended as a cure for grief some mustard obtained from a family which had suffered no bereavement (*Light of Asia*, p. 124. . . . The story of Kisagotami comes from the Commentary on Dhammapaṇa). The story introductory to a discourse in the Pitaka texts is, as a rule, very short and commonplace, oftenest simply:—'At that time the Buddha

¹ *Maha Vagga*, i. 54. *S.B.E.*

was dwelling at Savatthi,' or the like. But from among the mass a few incidents may be selected which display traits of character.

There are many which represent Gotama as behaving with generosity to rival teachers and members of alien sects. For instance, when Siha, the Licchavian Commander-in-Chief (*Senápati*), had been converted, and applied to be received as a disciple, the Buddha said, 'Consider well, Siha, before you act; well-known men like you ought to consider well before they act.' This delighted Siha, and increased his confidence in the Buddha. 'Any of the other sects,' he said, 'if they had got me to join them, would have been carrying banners round all Vesáli, crying, "Siha, the commander-in-chief, has come over to us!"' His admiration culminated when the Buddha said, 'For a long time, Siha, your house has been one in which the Niganthas have always found food, so you should make a point of giving to them when they come on their begging rounds.'¹

It is almost exclusively among the wealthy and high born that the conversions are recorded, and gigantic are the gifts, especially in the way of cart-loads of food—500 cart-loads of sugar for instance—of which we read. Mendaka, though only a 'householder,' was a donor whose gifts cost him even less than those of the rich merchants and noblemen did to them, for his family possessed extraordinary advantages.

¹ *Maha Vagga*, vi. 31. 11, *S.B.E.*

He himself had the gift of being able, if he bathed his head and sat down by his granary, to fill it by making showers of grain fall from the sky; his wife had only to sit down by a dish to ensure its being filled with an inexhaustible supply; their son had an inexhaustible money-bag, and their daughter-in-law a rice-bag of similar qualities. It was a small thing for such a man to supply 1250 cows, each with her keeper, to supply the 1250 monks with fresh milk continually.¹

On another occasion, a devout woman who could get no meat for a sick monk, when meat was particularly necessary for him, secretly cut off a piece of her own flesh to send him; and, although this led to a stringent order forbidding the eating of human flesh, her wound was healed by the Buddha.²

Among the innumerable gifts which Buddha and the community accepted, were several of parks, like that which Bimbisara had presented at Benares. Of these the most celebrated is the Jētavana, near Savatthi, which was the gift of Anāthapiṇḍika, the prince and model of all donors. The conversion of this person, and the circumstances of his great donation are related with unusual distinction.³ He was the brother-in-law of the treasurer of Rajagaha, and the first intimation he received of the existence of a Buddha in the world, was derived from the excitement in which, on a certain day, he found his relative and all his house. 'Have you a wedding going on, or is the king coming?' he asked. 'No,' replied

¹ *Maha Vagga*, vi. 34.

² *Maha Vagga*, vi. 23.

³ *Culla Vagga*, vi. 4.

the treasurer, 'the Buddha is coming with his Community to eat at my house.' Hardly able to believe that he had been so happy as to have been born in a Buddha's days, Anathapindika determined to go the next morning to visit Gotama. Celestial beings opened the gates for him. Supernatural voices encouraged him, and strange alternations of light and darkness excited his expectations. He was received with unusual solemnity, and with some striking verses from the Buddha's lips, and was instructed and enlightened in the usual method. He invited the Buddha to take a meal with him on the morrow, and the invitation was accepted. The treasurer, the mayor, and the king all offered to assist him in providing the entertainment, but he declined their offers. The meal passed off as usual, but at the end of it, Anathapindika invited the Buddha to spend the rainy season at Savatthi. Gotama replied, 'The Tathagathas love solitude.' This was an intimation that a park would be required. Anathapindika made search in every direction, and decided that a garden belonging to a certain prince Jeta was exactly what was wanted, accessible but not crowded or exposed. But it was not to be bought for less than such a number of pieces of gold as would cover its surface. The price was paid—though not accepted without reluctance on the seller's part;—the gold was brought in carts and the Jetavana was covered with coins. Dwellings and halls of every kind, baths and bathing tanks were

erected, and the park was handed over to the Buddha and the Community; as may still be seen and read in a bas-relief of the Bharhut Tope (erected probably B.C. 200—150) which is figured in Cunningham's *Stupa of Bharhut*, plate lvii., and of which there is a model in the museum at Calcutta.

The influence of Gotama's personal attraction and kindness is everywhere implied in the record. In a few cases attention is drawn to it, as when it is said of Roga, the Mallian, that Gotama—on the suggestion of Ananda that this Roga was an important person to secure—poured out such an effluence of love upon him, that he could not but follow the teacher as a calf (follows the cow).¹ This exertion of influence was confessedly dictated by policy, but the mention of it shows what was the tradition about Gotama's attractive power.

Otherwise there are not recorded in the early parts of the Pitakas, as far as I know, any special acts of kindness on the Buddha's part, with one beautiful exception. A monk was very ill, and neglected by the other monks, both because he was—as he said—of no use to them, and, as is evident from the story, because his condition was repulsive. Then the Buddha said to Ananda, 'Fetch some water, you and I will bathe this monk.' The Buddha poured the water over him, and Ananda wiped him; the Buddha lifted his head and Ananda his feet, and so they laid him on his bed.

¹ Maha Vagga, vi. 36.

The terms in which the Buddha rebuked the monks for their neglect, and the last words of the sentence I am about to quote, reach higher, I think, than anything else in the Pitakas, into the levels of Christian teaching. 'You monks have no mothers and no fathers to wait on you. If you do not wait on one another, who will wait on you? *Whosoever would wait on me, let him wait upon the sick.*'¹

A Christian can only rejoice to quote such a passage as this, and heartily congratulate his Buddhist friends upon it, and invite them to follow it.²

We have seen that the two chief disciples, Sariputta and Mogallana, were brought upon the scene with a careful record of the circumstances of their conversion; but this is not the case with others. The later Pitaka books contain classified lists of the monks (and nuns) who were distinguished in various ways; but there is nothing of this sort attempted in the Vinaya. Here a great part of the traditional history of the religion is evidently taken for granted. Persons who were among the chief in importance are brought upon the scene without introduction. For instance, a very prominent figure in the story is that of Ananda; but the occasion of his conversion is not recorded. He is said (in the commentaries) to have been a cousin of Gotama, and we find him,

¹ *Maha Vagga, viii. 26. 3.

² At present, I feel bound to say, the degree to which the Buddhists of Ceylon—speaking generally—are destitute of the character here attributed to their Founder, is shocking, and all but incredible to persons who have lived only in Christian countries.

from first to last, in the closest attendance on the Buddha. He nurses him in sickness; is often consulted about his movements; is the medium of many of his communications with monks and laymen. While others are represented as more learned and of higher attainment—in fact, Ananda, according to the tradition, was one of the last to become a Rahat—none were so near to the person and affections of the leader.

• Another important personage was the guilty Devadatta. It would be possible, I think, almost with exactness to trace, within the Pitaka books themselves, the growth of the tradition about this person. In the *Maha Vagga* he is mentioned only once, as having been the occasion, by reciting the Form of Confession in the presence of laymen, of a rule forbidding such a practice. But in the *Culla Vagga*, a second part of the history of the Rule, Devadatta's crimes are narrated in great detail. He had acquired, in former births, a great amount of merit, and in this life was far advanced in Buddhistic attainments, and a great master of supernatural powers. But pride and honours were too much for him; he coveted the first place, and set to work to obtain it. He cultivated the friendship of Ajātasatta, the young son of King Bimbisara, and aroused in him the same envy against his father the king, as he himself indulged against the Buddha.¹ 'You kill your father and be king, and I will kill Gotama and be Buddha.' The

¹ *Culla Vagga*, vii. 2.

young prince's attempt to murder his father was happily discovered and averted for the while (though he carried out his evil purpose later), and the king, acting on true Buddhist principles, voluntarily surrendered the kingdom to him. Devadatta persisted in his attacks on Gotama, once sending men to kill him, who, instead of killing him were subdued and converted by his influence; once hurling down a rock, which failed to strike him, but brought on Devadatta the greatest of all possible guilts, that of shedding a Buddha's blood; for a splinter of the fallen rock pierced the Buddha's foot. Foiled in these attempts, he set to work to introduce dissension into the Community, and for this purpose invented five points of greater strictness than the existing rules required. He persuaded a good many monks, Vajjians of Vesali,¹ to support him in demanding of the Buddha that these five points should be made rules. On the Gotama's refusing this, he led away a train of 500 monks, who were soon however induced to return by the preaching of Sāriputta. Devadatta was most generously treated by Gotama, and warned again and again; but when he persisted in his determination to divide the Community, his doom was solemnly predicted.

Several references to Devadatta may be gathered from other parts of the Pitaka, but they are all in obvious reference to the account already summarised. The Prince Abhaya was stirred up by Nātaputta to tax Gotama with having used unkind language about

¹ See Chapter xxi. p. 297.

Devadatta, calling him 'damned,' 'doomed to hell for a Kalpa,' 'past cure,' and the like; and the Buddha explained that a word which 'is true, and intended to do good, though it give pain, is right. The condemnation was uttered out of the Buddha's compassion for all beings.¹

It is as an illustration of the horrible evils of schism, and of the great dangers which arise from being praised and made much of, that Devadatta's story is elaborated; and all the references to him, except the first, belong to the later portion of the Pitaka cycle of traditions. They lead us, therefore, fitly on to the concluding portion of the biography we are constructing—which is to be found in something like a chronological order in the Sutta of the Parinibbana or Decease of the Buddha. For the mind of the compiler of that Sutta was evidently occupied with the thought of dissensions and schisms, and the desire to prevent or heal them. He has brought together a variety of topics, but this is the dominant one. His aim has been—with certain special reference, as I believe, to the circumstances of his own time—to represent the last thoughts of the Buddha as having been directed to the great purpose of unity.

§ 5. The throne of Magadha was occupied in these later days of Gotama's life by Ajatasattu.

¹ Maj. Nik. 58. In Sanyut. Nik. vi. 2. 2 the favourite verse 'Phalaṃ ve,' etc., is quoted; and in Angut. iv. 68, it is quoted and explained. So in Sanyut. xvii. 35. All these turn on words which occur in the Culla Vagga passage.

This monarch was anxious to overcome the Vajjians, and sent his minister to inquire of the Buddha whether he would succeed or not in his enterprise. The Buddha turned to Ananda and asked whether the Vajjians were in the habit of meeting in large numbers; whether they met and acted in unity; whether they were keeping their laws and making no innovations in them; whether they honoured the old; whether their women were well conducted; whether they were keeping in repair and treating with reverence the shrines which existed in their country; and, finally, whether they were maintaining due provision for the comfortable support of the Buddhist saints (rahats) in their country. To all these Ananda replied in the affirmative; and then the Buddha told the minister, that as long as these seven conditions of prosperity continued, the Vajjians would prosper. The minister went away with little hope of success; and the Buddha soon afterwards summoned his monks together to give them a corresponding instruction as to the conditions on which the permanent prosperity of the Community depended. In five sets of seven and one set of six, these conditions of permanence are stated, and they embrace—in no very logical order—nearly all the leading principles of Buddhism. It is not difficult to see that the first set of seven, which really corresponds to the seven qualities commended in the Vajjians, forms the original part of this collection of forty-one, and that the other thirty-four are later additions.

Then follows a curious account of Gotama's rebuking Ananda for a rash compliment. Ananda had professed his conviction that there never had been, nor ever would be, any one greater or wiser in absolute knowledge than Gotama. 'Brave words, Ananda; but can you see into the minds of all past and future Buddhas, and estimate exactly their characters and powers? Can you see into me, the Buddha of the present?' Poor Ananda admitted that he had none of these powers, and that all he was entitled to assert was that all Buddhas, past and present, must have obtained Buddhahood by the same course of extinction of lust, and of active self-training, by which Gotama had attained it.

The Sutta has next some sections which are in the main identical, though with some differences of arrangement, with certain sections which I passed unnoticed in the *Maha Vagga*. One of these is particularly important as possibly affording a means of ascertaining the date—or at least the relative date—at which the Pitakas were compiled.

Sunīdha and Vassakāra, the chief ministers of Magadha, in view of the war with the Vajjians, were building a city at Pāṭaligāma.¹ It was a spot haunted by thousands of those local deities which haunt trees, ponds, houses and the like, and (as the Buddha saw, though no one else did) the Magadhan authori-

¹ *Parinibb.* p. 12: Pāṭaligāmaṃ nagaraṃ māpenti. Rhys Davids translates, 'fortifying Pāṭaligāma'; but my translation is, I think, more correct, as implying that there was as yet no city there, it was a Gāma or country district.

ties were in unconscious but auspicious sympathy with (what a later phraseology would call) the genius of the place. 'Where the local deities, of highest power haunted, there the mightiest nobles were planning their dwellings, where the deities were of those medium or of lower dignity, there Maghadans of corresponding rank were settling. The Buddha revealed this auspicious fact to Ananda, and said, 'It is as if the Magadhan ministers had taken counsel with the Tāvatinśa gods. Of all the dwellings of noble men, of all places of traffic, this will be the chief city; Pataliputta, the central town. But there will be three dangers for Pataliputta, from fire, or from water, or from breach of friendship.'

The Buddha was of course entertained there, and he is represented as having expressed his satisfaction in some lines¹ which inculcate the culture of local deities in a way inconsistent with the strictest Buddhism, and which indeed belong to the region of the astrologer and the house charmer :—

'In what spot soever the wise man takes up his abode,
There let him give food to good and self-controlled men of religion :
To the deities that belong there let him give an offering :
Thus served they will serve him, honoured they will honour him ;
So dealt with, they feel for him as a mother for her own dear son :
He always sees good luck whom the local deities love.'

¹ Which in an earlier text, I think, might have been called 'Anacchariyā.'
—See Rhys Davids' notes (*S. B. E.* xi. p. 19 and p. 20). There is no reason for shrinking from saying that many stanzas which have been pressed into the service of Buddhism are thoroughly alien in spirit.

And the builders of the city resolved that the gate by which the Buddha went out should be called the Gotama gate, and the crossing at which he should cross the Ganges should be called the Gotama ferry. He did not cross, however, by the ferry, for the river was full; but miraculously disappeared from the one side and stood, with his train of monks, on the other.¹

Many a comprehensive discourse was uttered as the Buddha went from place to place in the neighbourhood of Vesali; but it was after he had entered on the retirement of the rainy season at Beluvā, near that city, that the symptoms of his approaching end appeared. He became very ill, and suffered much, but he would not pass away till he had bidden his monks farewell.² So by an effort of will he turned back the sickness, and retained his hold on life. On his recovery, Ananda asked for some last instructions. The reply is very striking.

‘What is it the Community expects of me? I have preached the doctrine, making no distinction of inner and outer, the Buddha has not reserved therein the teacher’s perquisite.³ Should any one thus think, Ananda, “I will be the leader of the Community of monks,” or “the Community is dependent upon me,” I suppose he, Ananda, must lay down rules on any point concerning the Community! This has never been

¹ Mahaparinibb. S., p. 14.

² Mahaparinibb. S., p. 21.

³ A proverbial expression for some point of skill or science kept back, that the teacher might still be superior to his pupil.

my (the Tathagata's) thought ; "I lead the Community, the Community depends on me." How should I lay down rules on any point for the Community ? I am now worn, outgrown, old, aged, far on in years ; my age is going on for eighty. Just as a worn-out cart, Ananda, can get along only with all sorts of patching and care,¹ so methinks it is only with patching and care that my body gets along. When the Tathagata by abstraction from all marks of outward objects, by the extinction of certain sensations, lives in the attainment of that freedom of mind which consists in noting nothing, then only is the Tathagata's body kept at ease. Therefore, I say, Ananda, be yourselves your lamp, yourselves your refuge, have no other refuge ; have the doctrine for your light, have the doctrine for your refuge, have no other refuge. How can this be ?

'Let us suppose a monk so lives,—with so true an estimate of the body, as to be in bodily things austere, attentive, recollected, and to subdue all pain of craving ; so true an estimate of sensation, as to be in regard of sensations austere, attentive, recollected, and to subdue all sense of pain ; so true an estimate of thought, as to be in regard of thoughts austere, attentive, recollected, and to subdue all thoughts of pain ; then a monk lives his own lamp, his own refuge, with no other refuge ; with the doctrine for his lamp and for his refuge, and with no other refuge. And whoever either now or after my death shall so

¹ Veghamissakena.

live, they will be in the highest place among those who are lovers of the Rule.'

After this the Buddha is recorded to have deliberately resolved on dying in three months' time. He might, with such powers as he had acquired, have prolonged his life—so he reflected—for a cycle or for the rest of the current cycle of time; and Ananda, on hearing his reflections, entreated him to do so; for Mara was besetting Ananda's mind. And soon Mara approached in person, and reminded the Buddha of words he had before spoken—at the very beginning of his Buddhahood, as is afterwards explained—announcing his resolve not to enter on his final extinction till he had fully preached his doctrine. 'Now,' cried the enemy, 'all that has been done; disciples, monks and nuns, lay men and lay women, have been trained, who can teach and explain the doctrine to others, etc. Let the Blessed One therefore enter on his final extinction.'

'Be at ease, wicked one,' replied the Buddha, 'the Tathagata's final extinction is not far distant, at the end of three months the Tathagata will enter on final extinction.' This solemn renunciation was marked by a mighty earthquake, such as occurs—we here learn—only on eight occasions: viz., by natural causes, by the supernatural power of meditation in some unusually wise sage, Brahman or Buddhist, or of some deity higher or lower, and on the occasions of a Buddha's conception, his birth, his attainment of Buddhahood, his setting in motion the royal wheel

of the law, his deliberate renunciation of life, and lastly his actual final and utter passing away from existence.¹

Ananda tried in vain to persuade his master to remain for the rest of the cycle; but he was reminded—and the information must have been as mortifying to Ananda as it is strange to us—that this was not the first time that he had had the opportunity of urging such a request. Again and again, in various scenes, the Buddha had given him a very strong hint by saying, ‘One of my power could easily, if he liked, remain in life all the cycle;’ and on either of these occasions, had Ananda taken the hint and begged the Buddha to stay in life, he would have consented! So it is Ananda, it seems, by his dulness about taking a hint, who has prevented our having the son of Suddhodana still among us!

In due time the Buddha arrived with Ananda at the Kútágára hall, and preparations were immediately made for assembling all the monks of the Vesali district (or province, Símáwa). He addressed them in an earnest though very technical sermon, insisting on the great heads of his system as essential to the permanence of religion, and to the good and happiness of gods and men. He ended with the words, ‘Behold now, monks, I impress it upon you; all (composite) things are subject to the law of dissolution; press on earnestly to perfection; soon

¹ This set of eight earthquakes leads the compiler to introduce, quite irrelevantly, two lists of eight stages of the higher meditation.

the Tathagata's final extinction will take place; at the end of three months the Tathagata will enter on final extinction.' Or, as the versified form of the story expresses it:—

'Full ripe is my age, little of my life remains,
I shall leave you and go,—I have made myself my own refuge;
Be untiring, be recollected, and keep to the rules of conduct;
Let your resolution be firmly held, guard your thoughts well;
Whoso in this doctrine and rule untiringly toils on,
Shall leave the ocean of repeated births and make an end of sorrow.'

In leaving Vesali, Gotama turned slowly and deliberately as an elephant does, and took a solemn last look at the city, and went on from place to place giving various instructions. One of these is very significant as an indication of the relative date of the Sutta in which it occurs. He addressed the monks on the method of testing or verifying doctrine. Whether a particular doctrine be asserted by a single monk who professes to be reporting what he actually heard the Buddha say, or whether it be the tradition of a particular monastery or district, or that of one, or of many very learned elders, there is but one test. The sentences and syllables of the dogma under discussion are to be carefully taken and placed beside the sacred text and compared with the rule.¹ If they do not

¹ Parinibb. S., 39. The words are Sutta and Vinaya, the names of the two collections afterwards called Pitakas. The 'learned' elders above are described as 'bahussutá,'—'full of tradition' (smṛiti), and 'vinayadhára,' 'carrying about with them the rule' (vinaya), and 'mátikadhára,' 'knowing by heart the maticápadáni,' the 'summaries' of doctrine, etc., and lists of abridged rules. All these expressions refer evidently to a fully compiled and classified 'text' (and almost certainly to a written one), and mark the late date of the Mahā-parinibb. S.

stand with the text and bear comparison with the rule, then it follows that such a dogma is certainly not the word of the Buddha,—it is that monk's mistake (and so conversely).

This important passage is succeeded by a more strictly narrative (and I doubt not, far more ancient) portion of the Sutta.¹ Gotama and Ananda went on to Pává, and were the guests there, with others of the Community, of Cunda the smith. Besides the other 'hard and soft foods,' cakes and curry and rice, Cunda had provided a quantity of dried pork. The Buddha at once perceived that this pork was not likely to be safely eaten by any one, of all gods and men, except a Buddha. He made his own meal upon it, but ordered what remained to be buried in a hole. (The next paragraph I translate quite literally for the reason given in the note.)² 'So when the Bhagavat had eaten the food of Cunda the smith, there arose in him a fierce disease of the nature of

¹ The sections marked iv. 14-23 and 53-58 (M. P. S. pp. 41 *seq.*, and 47, etc.) are founded on an old metrical narrative, probably the same as that of which fragments appear in the first book of the Maha Vagga. These sections are free from the interspersion of elaborate doctrinal passages.

² Here are three versions side by side, (1) the prose of the compiler, which is only a prose arrangement of (2), a nearly contemporary 'sloka,' and (3) the earlier and quaintier Triahutubh stanza, differing in several phrases from (2). In (3) there is no allusion to the fortitude with which the pain was borne, which is developed in (1). Nor is there, according to my translation, in (2). But Rhys Davids translates the second line of (2) thus:—

'He bore with fortitude the pain
The sharp pain even unto death!'

This is due, I think, to an oversight. *Samphusi* means 'felt' or 'felt much,' and 'dhīro' is a common title of the Buddha, which may be translated either 'brave' or 'wise.'

dysentery, violent pains go on, such as lead to death. These pains, however, the Bhagavat, in conscious recollectedness, accepted without complaint. 'Let us go, Ananda, to Kusinára.' The venerable Ananda assented, saying, 'Even so, my lord!'

Or thus :—

'When he had eaten the food of Cundu the smith (so I have heard)
The wise one experienced a disease, violent, such as leads to death'

Or thus :—

'When he had eaten the dried pork,
Violent illness arose in the Teacher :
The Bhagavat suffered violent purgings, and said,
I will go to the city of Kusinara.'

Here follows a trifling episode which led to the Buddha's giving an account of his own calm and self-concentration, such that a furious storm had taken place around him without his noticing it. The next section tells us of his being robed in a set of robes of cloth of gold, the gift of a new adherent, the splendour of which was outshone by the brilliance of the Buddha's skin. For as the day of his decease approaches, the same phenomenon occurs as at the time of his acquiring Buddhahood: his complexion becomes pure and lustrous.¹

Then the old narrative is resumed, and although

¹ The expression is the same as in former places, where the same is said of Gotama, of Assaji, of Sáriputta and others; but what was told simply in the *Maha Vagga* is here treated as a regular miracle. It was developed later into a sort of 'transfiguration.'—See Rhys Davids' note, *S. B. E.* xi. 82.

it is given also in prose, we may quote the metrical version :¹—

‘*On Buddha went, on to Kakuttha river,
Fair flowed the white water and clear and pleasant,
Down thither stepped weary and worn the Teacher,
Great, peerless one, Tathagata, chief of beings !
The Teacher bathed, he drank and he crossed the river,
He first and chief, followed by all the brethren.
Still setting forth doctrine, the Blessed Teacher,
The mighty Sage, came to the Mango-Garden.
Then straight the monk, Cundaka² named, he summon’d,
“Fold now a robe fourfold and spread it ’neath me.”
Straight Cunda heard the voice of the self-controll’d one,
Fourfold in haste folded a robe and laid it :
Down lay the great Teacher, so worn and weary,
While Cunda sat down on the ground before him’*

Some confusion between this monk Cunda and Cunda the smith has led to the insertion here of a considerate message, left by the Buddha with Ananda for the comfort of Cunda, if the latter should feel remorse at the thought that the food he gave had been followed by the Buddha’s extinction. Ananda was to assure him, as from the Buddha’s own lips, that this offering of Cunda’s, and that first offering of food made on his own attainment of Buddhahood, were the two most meritorious of all offerings. The result of that action of Cunda’s would lead to long life, to beauty, to happiness, to glory, to heaven, to sovereign power.

¹ Corresponding to (3) in the instance referred to in p. 76, n. 2, and very probably continuous with that passage. I have rendered it baldly enough, but into a metre which fairly represents the original.

² This cannot be the same person as Cunda the smith, but there may be some explanation which has not reached us, of the coincidence of the names.

The next stage of the journey was the last. With a great train of monks the Buddha went to the Sála Grove, where, between a pair of Sala trees in every respect alike, the couch was spread, and the Buddha lay down with his head to the north, reclining on his right side, with full consciousness and recollectedness, in a lion-like repose.

At this moment the Sala trees burst into unexpected bloom, the heavens rained flowers upon the hero's form, and heavenly music was wafted from the skies. But such signs of honour as these, said the Buddha, are not the true honour of a Tathagata. Rather, he said, the monk or nun, lay man or lay woman, who lives in the performance of all the duties and ways of religion, such a one pays him the true, the higher honour and service.

Unseen spirits were now crowding the air to get a sight of the great Being,—not the space of a pin-point for twelve leagues round but was full of deities, —some ready to tear their hair in vulgar grief, but some clear-sighted enough to see that 'all things are unabiding,' and to acquiesce in what is inevitable.

Under the twin Sala trees, before the last moment came, several incidents and discourses of very unequal interest are recorded as having found place. Some are mere heterogeneous notices of rules; some are important summaries of doctrine; but two classes only will be mentioned now, those which are really part of

Gotama's biography,¹ and those which have a historical interest.²

Ananda is a very well marked character, and always wins our sympathy. He was rather slow, as we have seen; during all his master's life he failed to attain *rahatsip*; but his patient affection and gentleness are very attractive. One is glad to find him appreciated. While Gotama reclined between the Sala trees, Ananda withdrew, and stood leaning against some doorway, and wept at the thought, that his kind master was so soon to pass away, and he still a learner! Gotama sent for him, and comforted him, and uttered in three parallel sentences these touching words: 'A long time, Ananda, you have followed and served me with acts of love, with words of love, with thoughts of love, kind, blessed, unvarying, immeasurable.' And then he spoke at length to the monks in praise of Ananda, comparing him, for the graciousness of his manners, to a universal monarch.³ But poor Ananda was immediately to give another proof of the limited range of his powers. He tried to dissuade the Buddha from accomplishing his extinction in the insignificant little town of Kusinara. Let him go and end his life rather in some great city, Rajagaha or Benares. The Buddha rebuked him;

¹ Biographical. Ananda's comfort and his praise. The suggestion that Gotama should not die in Kusinara. The Mallians told. Subhaddha's conversion. Last warnings (vi. 1) and inquiries, the last words: the way of decease.

² Historical directions are given about the four pilgrimages, the burial of Emperors and Buddhas, and the erection of dagobas; which all show the late date of the Sutta.

³ Cakkavatti, cf. chapter xx. p. 280.

Kusinara must not be called an insignificant town; ages ago it had been the royal city of the great Mahá Sudassana (the ideal king),¹ and had been adorned with every element of (the conventional description of) wealth and splendour. Ananda was then sent to prepare the nobles of Kusinara for what was to take place; and they came full of grief, and were presented, family by family, to the Buddha. The news of the approaching end decided a certain Subhadda, a religious person of great attainments and importance but not yet a Buddhist, to come and inquire of the Buddha, and he was soon converted and became a rahat, the last disciple gained by Gotama himself.

Little more remained to be done. Three times Gotama called on his monks, if there were any point on which any one of them had yet any doubt, now while he was yet with them to ask about it. Not one had a point to raise. And the Buddha asserted the conclusion, that there was not one in the whole Community in whose mind one doubt existed in regard to the Buddha, the Doctrine, or the Order, the Way or the Path: the last of the 500 had at least entered indefectibly on the path which must lead him at last to perfect insight.

Then the Blessed One said to the monks, 'Behold now, mendicants, I say to you, everything is subject to decay, press forward untiringly to perfec-

¹ A very famous Sutta, translated in *S. B. E.* vol. xi., describes the glory of this monarch and his city.

tion.' This was his last word. He then entered into the first stage of meditation, thence into the second, the third, the fourth; from the fourth stage of meditation he proceeded to the realm of the infinity of space, thence to that of the infinity of thought, and so into the realm of nothingness, then into that of neither consciousness nor unconsciousness, and thence into that in which all action of either thought or perception is at an end.

Ananda, the simple-minded, thought all was over, but Anuruddha, the great metaphysician of the Community, said, 'Nay, brother Ananda, this is not full Nirvana; he has entered that state in which all action of either thought or perception is at an end.'

Nirvana it appears is not the culmination of abstraction. The Buddha retraced his course through all these stages of exalted meditation, step by step to the fourth, the third, the second, the first; and in the moment of issuing from the first stage of meditation, the Blessed One became extinct.

The event was accompanied by a fearful and terrible earthquake, and by suitable reflections from beings of every grade. The supreme Brahma uttered a stanza which was hardly worthy of the occasion; at any rate it was far surpassed in conciseness and in celebrity by that of Sakra, 'the leader of the gods:—

‘All things¹ are unabiding,
 Birth, death,—their law is this :
 They come to birth ; they perish,—
 End all, and *that* is bliss !’

‘The utterance of the metaphysician Anuruddha was more definitely an epitaph :—

‘There came no strife of gasping breath from that strong heart and steadfast will :
 All longing past, all calm attain’d, did that high sage his date fulfil ;
 Accepted willingly the pain, with heart unmov’d and mind at peace ;
 As some bright flame² extinguish’d fades, so came to him the glad release.’

The verse attributed to Ananda almost overdoes his character for simplicity :—

‘Moment of terror ! moment of thrilling awe !
 When glorious Buddha, rich in every grace,
 In final dissolution pass’d away !’

Men and deities alike, each according to his own degree of detachment from desire, received the news with bitter emotion or philosophic calm, and Anuruddha especially reminded the brethren how the departed had prepared them to recognise the law of separation and dissolution. And in such converse the night was spent.

For six days the preparations for the burning, which had been intrusted to the Mallian nobles of

¹ The word *sankhára* implies ‘compound,’ and suggests the argument which is at the base of the statement, viz., that what has been formed by putting elements together is liable to be destroyed by their separation ; the rendering ‘things’ is therefore inadequate. On the other hand, since ‘*sankhára*’ includes all objects, no other word than ‘things’ is large enough.

² Perhaps the participle ‘*pajjotassa*’ implies, ‘as what has been kindled is liable to extinction.’

Kusinara, were carried on with acts of homage to the corpse, with dances, music and flowers and decorations ; and on the seventh day, with every 'sign of honour, borne by eight chieftains of the Mallians,' the corpse was taken—not, as was first thought of, and as would have been usual, around the outside of the city, but, according to a divine intimation, through the very midst of the city—to a spot upon the east of it where the cremation was to be. No pollution could be caused by such a corpse ; on the contrary all Kusinara was knee-deep in the flowers which were showered from heaven, to strew the way of the auspicious procession.

In accordance with an idea which we have already met with more than once in this narrative, the remains of the Buddha were treated, as Ananda directed, like those of a universal monarch (*cakkavatti*). The body was wrapped first in a new cloth, then in cotton wool, then in another new cloth, and so on till it had been wrapped in 500 such double wrappings. It was then placed in an iron oil vessel, and this was enclosed in another iron vessel. They then made a mound of all kinds of perfumes, and laid thereon the body of the Buddha. When the 500 monks had assembled, they walked three times round the pyre, and did homage at the feet of the Buddha ; and thereupon the pyre took fire. Every particle of the body, except the bones, having been burnt, and not an ash remaining, rain fell from heaven and waters burst up from beneath the earth, and so the pyre

was quenched, while the Mallians added perfumed waters.

They then placed the bones in ~~the~~^{their} council-hall, and made a lattice-work of spears and a rampart of bows¹ around them; and for seven days with dance and song, and music and flowers, and perfumes, did honours and homage and reverent service.

To obtain a portion of the relics and erect in the honour of the Buddha a shrine, or stūpa,—such probably as is now called in Ceylon a 'dagoba' or 'relic-holder,'—was now the ambition of all who could claim to do so.

Gotama had belonged to the Kshatriya or royal (or warrior) caste; so first the King Ajatasattu, and then the Licchavian nobles of Vesali, and then the Sakyans of Kapilavastu, and three other clans, and with these one Brahman, of Vethadīpa—seven claims in all—asserted their respective claims to a share in the bodily remains, and to the right of erecting a dagoba over them. But the Mallians of Kusinara were unwilling to part with their possession till a Brahman named Dona² came forward as peace-makers, and divided the relics into eight portions, keeping for himself the vase (in which they had been collected). This Brahman by caste was of course a Buddhist by religion, and the story of his intervention evidently formed part of the older tradition. It is recorded in simple verse:—

¹ A Scythian custom?

² There is something suspicious about this name, as Dona (the Drona of the Mahabharata) is rather like Doni, a relic vessel.

‘Hear, rev’rend sirs ! only a word I offer :
 Our Buddha dear taught us a law of meekness.
 Ill were it if over the distribution
 Of *his* remains strife should arise and warfare !
 Come, rev’rend sirs ! let us, in love and concord
 Sweetly agreed, make of them eight divisions :
 Wide be the shrines distributed through the regions,
 And many men won to the faith of Buddha.’

One other Kshatriya clan put in a claim after the distribution, but it was too late.¹

NOTE.—INDICATIONS OF AN ANCIENT METRICAL LIFE
 . OF GOTAMA.

There is reason to think that the oldest tradition of the life of Gotama was handed down in a continuous poem, in Trishtubh metre, of the form Gantvána Buddho nadiyañ Kakutthañ ; fragments of which have come down to us, imbedded in the prose narrative.

This metre has peculiar claims to be considered ancient (Dr. Oldenberg has remarked on the antiquity of the passage from which I have quoted a line,² and it is particularly associated with the biographical notices of the Buddha.

¹ Two incidents, omitted above, deserve a passing reference,—the parts played respectively by Mahakassapa and by Subhadda. Mahakassapa was at a distance when the tidings reached him,—reached him by his seeing some one carrying one of the celestial flowers which had fallen in Kusinára,—and a supernatural intimation was given to the Mallians that the cremation should be delayed till he arrived. Subhadda was a far less loyal disciple. He had been but a little while admitted, and his disloyal words were the one exception to the pious tone which prevailed round the Buddha’s tomb. He said, in effect : Why should we be sorry ? we are rid of a strict master ; now we can make what rules we like. It was this remark of Subhadda’s, we find from the Culla Vagga, which led to the determination of the 500 monks to meet and formulate all the Buddha’s words without delay, and it was Mahakassapa who presided at their assembly. But of that assembly the Sutta says nothing.

² I have translated it, preserving the metre, on p. 78.

A.—The metre is ancient.

(1.) It is closely allied to the Greek and Latin sapphic and hendecasyllabic.

(2.) Passages in it contain a large proportion of the old grammatical forms and old words, such as 'have,' 'brúhi,' etc.

(3.) They contain prosodical peculiarities, some of which, from their affinity to old Latin prosody, I believe to be old, *e.g.*, the quantity of *o* common, and the (1) omission and (2) elision of *m*.

There are of course late verses in this metre, which was a favourite one (though the later ones are not so well written), as there are ancient verses in other metres (both in sloka and in other forms of Trishtubh); but I do not think any other metrical passages can be so distinctly identified as ancient, as those which, being in this metre, bear the other marks of age.

B.—It is used in biographical passages.

(a.) Out of about fourteen instances of this metre in the Vinaya Pitaka, seven are in the biographical four first *bhanavaras*, Maha Vagga, i. 1-22; four are in the biographical passage, Culla Vagga, vii. 1-4; and one in a half biographical passage, Maha Vagga, x. 3. The three which occur in Parinibb. S., are all biographical, referring to Cunda's service, Subhaddha's late admission, and Dona's action about the relics.

(b.) None of the additional features of the biography or history which are found in Samantapásádiká are supported by verses of this kind.

CHAPTER V

THE BUDDHIST MORAL SYSTEM IN GENERAL

AN author who wishes to describe the Buddhist view of morals in a way intelligible to an English reader, and yet as nearly as possible in the language and spirit of the Buddhist books, is met by considerable difficulties; and in stating some of these difficulties I shall perhaps be able at the same time to convey to the reader some true impressions as to the shape and structure of the books from which our materials are to be derived.

Greatly as the metaphysical element in Buddhist teaching has sometimes been overstated, it is impossible entirely to separate the discussion of morals from that of the general laws of being. This is true to some extent in regard to any moral system, ancient or modern, Greek or Oriental; for whether we consider that the end of conduct is the attainment of truth, or regard the knowledge of truth as the foundation of conduct, either way the two are intimately associated. But it is conspicuously true in the case of the Buddhist system. Not only did Gotama base his rules on his 'Four Truths,' but knowledge itself in the

Buddhist view is almost identified with moral power. The very name 'Buddhism,' of a system which is pre-eminently one of conduct, is derived from 'budh,' to know ; and the two are linked together by another characteristic feature of Buddhism, the emphasis which it lays on meditation. Meditation, by which knowledge is brought to bear on conduct, is in fact a part of conduct. Conversely, meditation, by which truth is arrived at, depends upon the essentially moral conditions of purity and self-control. Of the intermediate position which belongs to meditation, the Buddhist compilers were well aware ; and accordingly they classified the whole course as conduct, meditation, knowledge. The Buddhist, like the Platonist, though for very different reasons, can never separate virtue from knowledge. We shall see, however, that the knowledge involved is that of a strictly limited group of propositions, and that neither metaphysics nor intellectual knowledge play any large part in the Buddhist system.

Nor are morals separated clearly from metaphysics in the sacred books. It has been usually said that morality is the theme of the Sutta Pitaka, or collection of discourses, exclusively. This is not the case. The Vinaya Pitaka, or collection of the Rules of the Community, contains a very large element of directly moral precepts and lectures, and has embodied in it some of the same discourses which are found in the Sutta (or Sutra) Pitaka. The Abhidhamma Pitaka, though so often spoken of as

deep and subtle, consists in great part of matter similar to that of the Sutta Pitaka, and often differs little from it in arrangement. In the portions of this Pitaka which have been published, many of the sections are virtually Suttas, only without the preface, 'on such an occasion the Buddha said,' and long passages are word for word the same as in the Sutta Pitaka. In fact in the 'Puggala Pannatti' may be found some of the best concise summaries of the whole system. In speaking, therefore, in the following pages of 'the Suttas' I shall not necessarily imply that my material is taken from the Sutta Pitaka, though that will usually be the case. The popular division is so far true that the Sutta Pitaka is the chief repository of teaching specifically moral.

But neither in the Sutta Pitaka nor in either of the others do we find a systematic treatment, on any large scale, of the whole subject of morals.

The notion of a volume, setting out the whole of a subject in a continuous treatise, is unknown to the ancient Buddhist literature. And accordingly, in regard to morality, there is not to be found in the 'canonical' books any complete and regular work upon it, nor any authorised course of instruction.

Nor could such a treatise or course be formed by reading the Suttas in succession. The longest Suttas are hardly longer than a modern essay or sermon; the large majority are shorter; none are so long as the longer dialogues of Plato; and one is not supplemen-

tary to another ; each does not take up the subject where the last left off ; each purports to be complete in itself. There is very little gained by reading two in succession. It is true that they are extremely systematic in a certain sense of the word, and that many of them cover or summarise a very large part of the field;¹—in fact it is their vice to be each separately exhaustive—but they go over the field in different directions, and divide up the same subject by a great variety of independent classifications. For instance, while one leads the disciple from conversion to *Nirvana* by the successive casting off of a series of ‘impediments,’ another leads him the same journey by the rooting out of certain bad habits or states of mind. Under a different name, or even under the same name, the same vice, as for instance ‘hatred,’ will appear in both series. One Sutta will treat of the three kinds of act, acts of body, of speech, and of thought ; and the next Sutta will contrast two characters, that of the man who injures both his neighbour and himself, and that of the man who does good to both ; and this contrast will consist in the acts, words, and thoughts of the two men. By studying a multitude of such chapters one receives a forcible impression of the teaching as a connected whole ; but it is impossible to compile a connected treatise by putting such chapters together. Such an attempt would result in a mass of repetitions and cross-divisions.

¹ The Sutta translated on pp. 328-337 is a good instance of this, and comes as near as any one would do to giving the reader a notion of the systematic method.

This will appear clearly enough from a rough abridgment of the first and second Suttas of the Majjhima Nikāya, or Collection of treatises of middle length.

The first insists on the necessity of an exact knowledge of the true character, as regards impermanence, etc., of the outer world. Such knowledge will free the man from all attachment to the four material elements, earth, water, fire, and air, to animals, to the lower deities, to the various (fully enumerated) higher deities, to the four infinite regions, to the objects of sight, hearing, thought, and consciousness, to unity, multiplicity, and universality, and to Nirvana itself. This condition exists in the advanced disciple, and is caused by the destruction in him of lust, spite, and stupidity; and this condition is identical with the final perfection of a Buddha.

The second Sutta teaches how to destroy the *asavas* or 'corruptions,' of which three are specified, those of desire, existence, ignorance. They are got rid of by seven methods, viz., by *thinking* only of such things as tend to get rid of them, by *guarding* the five senses, by recollectedness in the *use* of the conventional list of necessities, by *resignation* to the conventional list of inconveniences, by *avoidance* of the occasions of evil, by *dispelling* the three wrong reflections, desire, malice, and cruelty, by *practising* the seven elements of supreme wisdom. He who has achieved these has ended sorrow.

From this instance it will also be partly seen in

what sense the Suttas are systematic. They are constructed upon numerical systems. There are three wrong reflections,—there are eight of this, and four of that; a man may be such and such in ten ways—this numerical method is their system. Analysis, other than numerical division, is very rare. Discussion, in the sense of shaking out a subject and shaking it clear by inquiry, is unknown. There is no searching back to the origin of habits; no recognition of the truth that one virtue runs into another, or that a vice may melt into a virtue by imperceptible gradations. All is definite and dogmatic. Hard-and-fast lines are drawn; words are used with unswerving regularity, but their meaning is not much elucidated. If the meaning of words is explained, it is by accumulating synonyms, or—what is the best part of the whole method—by similes. But results are given, not inquiries. Nothing is tentative.

Such a method is distasteful to an European reader. • We delight in watching the process of inquiry, the balancing of different views. In morals especially, we do not feel that we have got far till we have got behind the *names* of the virtues and the vices. We have been accustomed—the European world has been accustomed since the days of Socrates—to find moral discussion consist largely in such inquiries as, ‘What is holiness?’ ‘What distinguishes courage from rashness?’ And Socrates taught us, once for all, not to expect absolute unqualified answers to these questions. Mixed motives, blended char-

acters—these interest us. But the Buddha knows nothing conditional, and condescends to nothing tentative. There are so many bad ways and so many good; the good are perfectly distinct from the bad; and the bad ways all tend to re-birth, and all the good ways to deliverance from existence.

Such is a general description of the moral method of the Buddhist books. There are exceptions, and the exceptions are to us the most attractive parts of the Suttas. But they are few. They are oases of genuine human inquiry in a desert of fictitious accuracy.

I have said that we do not find an authorised course of instruction, or a continuous treatment of the whole subject of morality; but I have also alluded to the outline of such a course—conduct, meditation,¹ knowledge—which presents the received classifications of the whole subject. As a guide to a complete arrangement of the whole system of Buddhism it is not to be at all despised or set aside. By a persistent regulation of his conduct, a man becomes qualified for the practice of meditation, which carries him, it is pretended, stage by stage to that condition of mind in which he sees into the nature and causes of things, and in attaining this insight or knowledge he has attained the final goal. Such is the received Buddhist view of the moral course; and it is perhaps possible,

¹ Samādhi, strictly, the self-concentration by which meditation is possible. The act of meditation in its several stages is jhāna, but these collectively are often called samādhi.

without much violence, to exhibit all the different parts of the teaching under these three heads. There is a class of Suttas formed on this plan, of which that translated in p. 328 is a specimen.

But the European reader will probably feel that this is not an altogether satisfactory order. He will hold that insight into the meaning and purpose of life is the origin, at least as truly as it is the result, of intelligent moral conduct. In a treatise at any rate he will expect to see the theory first laid down, and then to see practice directed according to theory. And this order is not unrecognised in the Buddhist writings. It is represented as the historical order in the Buddha's own proceedings. Gotama is represented as having first arrived at insight, and then, while he went about proclaiming the 'Truths' which he had realised, as having founded on these 'Truths' the training and the specific precepts and the methods of meditation. Both points of view are taken; and I suspect that the order,—truths, training, conduct,—is the older order, and that of conduct, meditation, knowledge, the later.¹

Whether this conjecture be well founded or not, I think my reader will be most likely to gain a vivid idea and correct notion of the whole teaching if I

¹ These three, with their result, emancipation, are the four great principles from ignorance of which all beings, including him who by discovering them was the Buddha, 'ran through the long course' of re-birth, *Angut.* iv. 1, 2. Sometimes the whole is summarised under the two heads *Samatha* and *Vipassana*, tranquillity and clear insight; or these are in the reverse order, *Angut.* iv. 170. Sometimes, more simply, *Vijjācaranāṃ*, knowledge and conduct.

first sketch the Buddhist ideal, as it appears to me, and then, in the light of the fundamental principles which are implied in that ideal and formulated in the metaphysical truths, describe the vices which are chiefly condemned and the virtues chiefly insisted on.

CHAPTER VI

THE IDEAL OF BUDDHISM

THE qualities most charming to the Indian mind are gentleness and calm. It is to the exhibition of these qualities in a high degree that we can attribute with the greatest probability the personal influence of Gotama the Sakyan, and his acceptance as the Buddha by his contemporaries; if we assume, and we are not at present justified in doubting it, that his contemporaries did allow him that title. These two qualities, gentleness and calm, unite to form the ideal of the Buddhist moralist. In their degenerate form they both pass into apathy, and there are passages of the Pitakas which recommend what is hardly better than that; but the general tone is nearer to the ideal, and recommends a gentleness that rises into positive love, and a calm which is based upon strength and resolution. The picture which is given to us of Gotama represents a character not only calm and gentle, but active, genial, not devoid of humour, deeply sympathetic, and intensely human. In the general tenor of the books we miss the humour; we miss much of the sympathy and

geniality; but we are for the most part in the presence of an ideal which is human and energetic. There are, it is true, many passages, especially those that deal with meditation or with supernatural attainments, which entirely leave behind all that is human, natural, probable, all that is genial or attractive, and sail away into a region of empty abstraction, which it would be flattery to call a cloud-land. But when these are excepted, we are generally in the region of reality, and are addressed in tones which are earnest even when they are most tedious. For third, though with an interval, after gentleness and calm, comes *earnestness* as an element of the Buddhist ideal. To be earnest, to be awake, to strive, and not to give up—these are watch-words incessantly repeated. The absoluteness of the repose to which the sage is invited is matched by the intensity of the effort that is required of him in the way.¹

To these three elements if a fourth is to be added, it will be that, the name of which we are obliged to represent, for want of a more exact equivalent, by 'Purity.' This cannot be entirely distinguished from calm; but while that is more philosophical, this is more moral. To be without any flaw of imperfection, passion, or feeling; no

¹ Sanyut. xii. 22. 6; 'Seeing that the doctrine has been by me so well spoken, made plain, laid open, proclaimed, all coverings cut, well may any noble youth who has entered the religious life in the faith of that doctrine—well may he exert effort: let skin and muscle and bone alone remain in his body, and flesh and blood dry up, there will be no standing still of his effort till he has reached the utmost point that can be reached by manly strength and manly effort and manly striving.'

ripple ruffling the calm sea, no grain of mud rendering turbid the pure waters, no bond or obstacle interfering with independence—this, I think, is the most favourable aspect, the least merely negative aspect, of the quality implied by 'Visuddhi.' The Buddhist monk is taught to seek

' the silence of the breast ;
 Imaginations calm and fair :
 The memory like a windless air :
 • The conscience as a sea at rest.'¹

But the idea of conscience has no exact counterpart in the Buddhist system, any more than the Christian idea of sin, as implying moral responsibility, or the transgression of the commands of a Person.

Gazing forth, like the sage of Lucretius, from the serene heights of wisdom, over the varied world of life, but radiating forth, unlike that sage, rays of kind feeling and love in every direction ; • calm amid storms, because withdrawn into a trance of dreamless unconsciousness ; undisturbed, because allowing no external object to gain any hold on sense or emotion, or even on thought ; owning nothing • and wanting nothing ; resolute, fearless, firm as a pillar ; in utter isolation from all other beings, except • by feeling kindly to them all, such is the ideal 'conqueror' of Buddhism. The last point of vantage by which existence could lay hold • of him is gone ; he cannot continue to exist !

¹ Tennyson, 'In Memoriam.'

It is a strange medley of contradictions ; of noble ideas pushed to extravagant and absurd degrees.

This description of the positive elements of the Buddhist ideal, though sketched almost entirely in terms derived from the 'sacred books,' is not, of course, to be found in them in this shape, and claims only to represent the impression which the writer has derived from reading the Buddhist books. It is placed here, not as being in itself an indisputably true impression, but as suggesting a way of arranging the details of which it is a generalisation.

The negative elements in such a picture are more than the positive. The removal of bonds, and disturbing influences, of all that causes either attachment or hostility, of all that can load the mind with fear or remorse, or that can cloud the judgment or the mental vision,—this removal of evil will be the principal object of effort. Along with this will go the cultivation of the kindly feelings as the chief positive aim.

As subsidiary to these comes the choice of a mode of life in which the evil can best be removed, or in which the man can best detach himself from encumbrances. That life is the life of a member of the Saṅgha or Community. The householder or layman is at a great disadvantage ; all the encumbrances have greater hold on him ; and so long as he remains in the house-dwelling state, a certain secondary ideal is all he can hope to reach. To this house life a secondary set of aims and duties belongs : to this

house life is addressed a special part of the teaching, especially that which treats of heaven and hell.

For in the ideal we have described there is no room for aspiration after praise or reward, or for fear of blame or punishment; neither heaven nor hell have any proper place in the system. If they have any place it is a secondary one, as considerations to influence those who have not yet approached the ideal, or as facts which concern those who never approach it. But to the advanced disciples of Buddha, hell is impossible, and heaven indifferent; they are not heard of: the heaven and hell system is the religion of the layman.¹

Further, out of this inevitable preference for the ascetic life, and from its wide separation from the house life, spring two special classes of duties, those of the monks towards their own order and towards the householder, and those of the householder towards the monk.

Two other important features of the ideal above described may till now, being negative features, have escaped the reader's notice.

The Buddhist saint stands in no relation of dependence towards any being above himself. There is no Creator, no Saviour, no Helper in his purview. Religious duties, properly so called, he has none. He has been his own refuge, his own light; he is what he is by grace of himself alone. Humility

¹ Séart thinks it was the only Buddhism that existed in Asoka's day; but it is not to be wondered at if what Asoka published in his inscriptions was the layman's rather than the Community's Buddhism.

would not become him; for gratitude he has no occasion.¹ There is thus excluded, from anything but a temporary or subsidiary position, whatever has elsewhere been chiefly meant by 'religion,' and much of what has elsewhere been known as 'virtue.'

The ideal, although of a human character, is the ideal to which, according to Buddhist principles, not human life only, but every form of life may rise. The Buddha has been, in former births, a stag, a dog, or a quail; and what is a quail now may hereafter be a Buddha. For there is no impassable barrier between the various grades of life, of deities, men, demons, or brute animals. What is now a demon may, in his demon life, acquire merit which will profit him hereafter as a man. One *karma* or course of consequence may carry him through a succession of lives as an animal, a god, an animal again, a demon, and again as a god or a man. It is only, indeed, in the human stage that the highest achievement, that of a Buddha, is possible; but Nirvana is accessible to all; to the superior deities and to men directly, and ultimately to all that lives. From this ultimate identification of the various forms of life arises a new and distorted branch of morality, giving exaggerated proportions to the duties of men towards the lower creatures.

¹ 'Except the expressions of astonished admiration to which the new converts give utterance . . . there is not a hint, as of course there could not be, among the virtues of the disciples of Buddha of anything corresponding to that sense of gratitude to the Divine and Beneficent Power whom all other men and all other religions have recognised as giving 'rain and fruitful seasons, filling their hearts with food and gladness.'

CHAPTER VII

ABOLITION OF IGNORANCE

THE beginning and ending of Buddhism is the abolition of ignorance. Ignorance is not looked at only in the light of a defect, as the mere absence of knowledge ; it is thought of as a positive evil. Under its terrible name, *avijjā*, it hangs over all living beings like an active plague, ever spreading its effects in misery and death. It plays the part of a cruel giant, hurling poor mortals into hell, or grinding them along in a weary round of slavery. It is the first parent of the whole genealogy of human woe.

This notion of ignorance as a positive malignant power or calamity is deeply rooted in the Buddhist mind. A young man who had been brought up in a Buddhist monastery in Colombo used to express his longing for more education in this way : ' I must at any cost get rid of this ignorance.'

What then is the knowledge which is sought ?

It would be an utter mistake to think of Buddhism as addressed chiefly to the intellect, or as concerned with the promotion of learning. Its adherents are

not required to furnish themselves with even the rudiments of ordinary culture, or to learn by heart any confession of faith. If Buddhism can be said to rest upon a creed, it is the shortest possible of creeds: 'There is no course of study prescribed for the ordinary disciple. The highest success is not out of the reach of the simplest. Learning is not highly esteemed.

The ignorance which has to be abolished is ignorance of a small body of practical 'truths,' as they are called. That all which exists is perishable and inevitably subject to sorrow; that sorrow can be destroyed only by destroying desire and all that is attached to existence, and that Buddhism furnishes the way to the destruction of these; this conviction is what constitutes knowledge. All beings are by nature plunged in ignorance of these principles (and no wonder, since they are all false), and an effective conviction of their truth is knowledge.

All other learning is disparaged. Questions of science, geography, astronomy, or even of metaphysics, are set aside as useless subtleties. Ignorance of these is not the ignorance that ruins.

Constantly, therefore, as we meet with the phrases 'knowledge' and 'ignorance;' constantly as we find the good Buddhist called the wise or the learned; characteristically as the Buddha is called the Omniscient, yet no emphasis is really laid on any other knowledge than that of the necessary connection of sorrow with existence. To know this fully is already to have escaped. The 'omniscient' Buddha, the

teacher of the three worlds, is one who has mastered this great principle, and has thereby himself escaped from further existence, and who teaches the way of escape to all other beings.

It will be seen now in what sense we say that the abolition of ignorance is the beginning and ending of Buddhism. It is the beginning because the whole system is founded on the realisation of the 'truths' which are the object of knowledge. These lie at the foundation. The whole religion is said as a matter of history to have started, as far as the present age is concerned, with the discovery of these 'truths' by Gotama.

It is the ending, because the whole system aims at producing in the disciple a similar conviction. The insight by which the chain of causation is broken, and re-birth rendered impossible, is attained by the disciple only when all the work is done. He who sees clearly—no longer believing it on the assurance of others, nor arriving at it merely as a conclusion of reasoning—that the cause of sorrow is desire, etc., he has no more duties to perform; no more virtues to acquire; no more reason to remain in life; his course is ended. This conviction is reached by different disciples at very different rates. By hearing the preaching of a Buddha many, we read, grasp it all at once, and are at once perfect. Others only enter on the course, and have still to run through long ages and many births before they arrive at insight.

It must be added, however, that the conviction of

these principles is in a further sense the starting-point as well as the goal of each disciple's course. The 'Truths' are not grasped in their formulated shape, and with full personal realisation of them, till the end; but some glimmering of them is necessary to make a man enter on the course. He has felt dissatisfied with the world; he is disgusted at the impermanence of things; he cries, 'Ah! nothing in the world is eternal!'—and so he turns to Buddhism. To arouse this sense of dissatisfaction, to elicit this cry of disgust, is the aim of all the Buddha's sermons and parables. To deepen this sense of dissatisfaction, and to remove all doubt as to the impermanence of things, is the purpose to which the training of the Community is directed. And from the detailed or scientific study of any of those things, whose perishableness he needs to be convinced of, the disciple is discouraged, because such study does not tend—this is the express ground of Gotama's objection—to produce dissatisfaction.

We read a great deal about the removal of doubt, and about certain fatal errors or 'heresies'; but these are still concerned with the same point, and do not imply any wider range either of study or of dogma. That things are eternal; that the self or personality in man has a continuous existence; these are the great 'heresies.' In regard to such questions as the ultimate nature of matter, elements, atoms and the like, or in regard to the nature of the soul, as we call it, or self, or the existence of the individual (or the

Buddha) after death, whatever may be said is alike a heresy or error.

So far is Buddhism from involving metaphysical study or learning. The destruction of ignorance is in fact a moral rather than an intellectual result.

If it now be asked, How is this result attained? the answer is in the main such as has already been indicated. It is realised by some sooner than by others: the Buddhist training, especially of the monk, is directed to securing it, by removing on the one side the obstacles and hindrances which prevent the mind's eye from being clear, and on the other side by methods of meditation.

Some men are held to be better prepared than others: the eyes of their mind being purified from the dust of passion, and their hearts softened by kindly feeling and quickened by enthusiasm or aspiration.

The orthodox view of this kind of receptivity, which distinguishes the ready hearer, may be gathered from some very familiar passages. We have seen that the newly enlightened Buddha is said to have hesitated to enter on the task of teaching what he had come to know, because it seemed to him a hopeless task. 'This doctrine,' he said, 'is not easy to understand for those who are sunk in lust and hatred, those who are given up to lust and enfolded with thick darkness cannot see it. It is against the stream' (of natural inclination), 'subtle, deep, difficult to see and minute.' But Mahabrahma came, at the entreaty

of the gods, to persuade him that it was not hopeless. 'There are,' he said, 'beings who have been born with eyes almost free from dust; they are dying from not hearing the doctrine; they will be understanders of the doctrine.'

Being thus persuaded to undertake the work of teaching, and considering with whom he might best begin, the Buddha thought, we read, of his early friend Alara Kalama, and said to himself, 'Long since his eyes have been almost free from dust.' He soon learnt, as the reader will remember, that Alara was already dead.

In the narratives of his subsequent sermons, where notable conversations are recorded, there are, in many instances, two stages in the process. The main portion of the discourse leads the hearer into the highest degree of receptivity, and then the specific and fundamental dogmas are stated to him, and he accepts them at once with complete insight. 'When the Blessed One perceived that Yasa's mind was prepared, softened, freed from hindrances, delighted, and believing, then he made known to him that which is the peculiar doctrine of the Buddhas, suffering, its cause, its destruction, the way.'

In regard to the several degrees in which different disciples may have attained to this condition, emerging from the flood of ignorance, freed from the restraints of attachment to existence, or existing things, and clear of the dust of passion, a striking and beautiful illustration is constantly repeated. 'As in a lotus

pond some flowers are under water, some reach to its surface, while others emerge and stand up out of the water, and the water does not touch them ; so the eyes of some are almost free from dust, those of others covered with dust, some have keen sense, some blunt, some have good characteristics, some bad, some are easy to teach and some difficult.'

This is the 'purity' (visuddhi) which the Buddhist system is said to aim at producing, and to the discipline of which we shall hereafter return. It consists mainly in the absence of two great classes of evils, attachment and passion. But before entering further upon these, we must examine somewhat more closely the dogmas which are called the 'Four Truths,' and the 'Chain of Causation.'

CHAPTER VIII

THE FOUR TRUTHS, ETC.

The Metaphysical Basis

THE founder of Buddhism, if any reliance at all is to be placed on the books which profess to describe his life and his teaching, had he been asked 'What are the fundamental and the characteristic elements of your system?' would certainly have replied, 'The Four noble Truths or the doctrine of the Chain of Causes.' It was by the attainment, under the Bo-tree, of the knowledge of these, that he became a Buddha. 'So long, O monks, as I did not possess in perfect clearness this triple, twelve-part, trustworthy knowledge and understanding of these Four noble Truths, so long I knew that I had not attained the 'supreme Buddhahood, etc. ; but since I have come to possess in perfect clearness, this, etc. . . . I knew that I have attained the supreme Buddhahood.'

These are not two distinct groups of dogma, for the Chain of Causes is the fuller statement of that theory of the cause of life with its sorrows, which is the central principle of the Four noble Truths.

We might, in fact, call them one dogma, that of the Causation and Destruction of Sorrow. It is difficult to exaggerate the importance which is assigned in the sacred books of Buddhism to these two closely allied formularies. At the same time it would be difficult to point to a single passage in which they are applied in any practical way, or in which their bearing on the moral precepts is shown. I believe that they have such a bearing. The view of life, of which they are the abstruse metaphysical statement, does underlie the whole moral teaching, and I shall try presently to show this.

But first, that the reader may be persuaded to give some special attention to these formularies, I will show him what position they occupy in the Buddhist texts.

The Vinaya Pitaka, or Collection of the Rules of Training for the Community, opens with the picture of the Buddha in the act of attaining Buddhahood, or in the immediate enjoyment of Buddhahood attained, sitting under his sacred tree, and revolving in his mind backward and forward the twelve-fold links of the Chain of Causation; through which ignorance leads up to birth and to the sorrows of life. Knowing this, he was a Buddha.¹ His first sermon, which set in motion the triumphant chariot-wheel of his doctrine and system, consisted of the declaration of the 'Four Truths;' the fact of sorrow, that desire is the cause of sorrow, that sorrow ceases when desire is removed, that this is effected by a certain course of

¹ *Maha Vagga*, i. 1.

conduct.¹ In a multitude of places² this formulary is spoken of as 'the characteristic teaching of the Buddhas.' These dogmas are emphatically repeated, as the end for which mankind have been so long seeking, running through life after life, in the sixth book of the same Vinaya.³

The knowledge of these is the 'deep knowledge,' in comparison with which mere morality is disparaged.⁴ The Four Truths are the one unambiguous dogma: on other speculative questions Gotama would not dogmatise, but these were incontrovertible.⁵ He who understands these things stands at the very door of immortality.⁶ He who sees the Chain of Causes and nature of things ceases to inquire into past, present, or future.⁷ This knowledge is placed above the law of love, and above meditation,⁸ as being the end for which these are practised. It is the crown of all supernatural powers.⁹

Ignorance is, in fact, simply ignorance of the Four Truths.¹⁰ In the grasp of them freedom consists.¹¹ A large part of the books is occupied with the statement and re-statement of them in every conceivable order and combination.¹² The first forty chapters of one collection (the Sanyutta Nikáya) are almost entirely given to this endless turning over of the formularies,

¹ Maha Vagga, i. 6. 19-22.

² e.g. Maha Vagga, v. 1.

³ Maha Vagga, vi. 29.

⁴ Brahmaj Sutta.

⁵ Potthapad. Sutta (Dig. Nik. ix. 33 etc.).

⁶ Sanyut. xii. 28-37.

⁷ Sanyut. xii. 20.

⁸ Angut. iv. 190.

⁹ Sāmañ. Sutta, 97.

¹⁰ Sanyut. xii. 2-15.

¹¹ Sanyut. xii. 41 *et passim*.

¹² Maj. Nik. ix., for instance, is the multiplication of the Four Truths into the Twelve Causes.

and it is expressly recommended in the same book.¹

This almost mechanical method is chiefly found in books which are among the later, as I believe, parts of the Pitaka,² but the estimate of the importance of the Four Truths and the Chain of Causation is the same everywhere.³ Before quoting these celebrated formularies, I must remind the reader what that view of the human soul and of human life is which is taken for granted in them. Unless we grasp that view of the human soul and of human life, we shall inevitably misunderstand the 'Truths.'

Buddhism does not hold that there is any such thing as a permanent independent soul, existing in or with the body, and migrating from one body to another. The Self or personality has no permanent reality: it is the result of certain elements coming together,—a combination of faculties and characters. No one of these elements is a person, or soul, or Self, but to their combination the name Self is popularly given. According to Buddhist doctrine, such an application of the name is a mistake, for there exists no such thing.⁴ The death of a man is the breaking up of this combination; not the separation of soul from

¹ Sanyut. xii. 32.

² Angut. and Sanyut.

³ See S. N. 3.12, 4.11; Dham. 1.20, *et passim*.

⁴ It is clear from this that transmigration is not, in Buddhist theory, the evolution of character. It is not a Buddhist sentiment that finds expression in the lines:—

'The man remains, and whatsoever
He wrought of good or brave
Will mould him through the cycle year
That dawns beyond the grave.'—TENNYSON.

body, but the dissolution both of body and of the aggregate of faculties and characters on which life depended.

Life then is a combination : separate those elements and life is at an end. If they never combined, there would be no life, no self, no personality.

But as things are, there is at work in the world a force by which these elements on which life depends, these faculties and characters,—form, consciousness, sense, perception, mental energy,—*tend to re-combine*. No sooner has a man died, and his life-elements been scattered, than they enter, under pressure of this force, into new combinations. A new life is the result. There is a fatal tendency to reproduce life (its name is *karma*), a fatal attraction (*upádána*) by which the elements of life cling to one another. And so, no sooner is a man dead, by the dissolution of his life-elements, than he comes into being again, by their re-combination. For during life he had set in motion that fatal force—all lives set it in motion and the world is full of it—(the consequence of action) which causes re-combination. It remains, after the man is dead, as a kind of desire for new life, and animates, as it were, with the desire to re-combine, those broken elements of life.

To avoid encumbering the matter with ideas foreign to our European thought, I have spoken so far of human life. But in Buddhist thought there is no permanent distinction between human life and other kinds or grades of life. When the life-elements by

which a man lived break up, they may re-combine to form either a man, or a deity, or a dog. 'He goes according to his "karma,"' according to his actions in the life just ended and in previous ones,—according to the total or resultant force of all the actions of the particular series of lives that is in question—he 'goes' to a new condition (*gati*). In the new condition his life-elements are new; nothing passes on from the past life to the new one, except the force which tends to form a new combination of life-elements. That force is the 'action,' the moral result of the past combinations in that series. It is this continuity that makes the Buddhist say, 'he goes,' and attribute to one being the whole series of lives (see the Sutta on p. 336).

But if all tendency to re-combine were gone, if the being had been so trained in resisting all kinds of attraction, that there should not remain even that attraction by which life-elements re-combine, if clinging of every sort were destroyed in him, then, after his death, there would be no re-combination, he would be free.

To be thus after death detached, he must be detached here. He must resist all attractions here, that the life-attraction may not re-appear after his death. He must uproot all desire; then the desire for re-birth will not assert itself. He must not love life; but must fix his mind on the idea of dissolution, transitoriness; and convince himself that he need not, and in fact in some sense does not, now exist. Then

when the body breaks up, there will be nothing left; no fuel will remain, not even the least tinder of desire for the flame of life to catch upon; he will go out altogether.

It is in the light of this view of human and other life (which was, in the main, not peculiar to Buddhism or newly taught by Gotama), that the Four Truths must be read.

But there is another feature in the habit of mind of those days, which must also be realised; a feature common, I suppose, to all the philosophy of the India of Gotama; the dreary view of life, as an evil. The fact that man is born to trouble seems to have been in the sixth century before Christ the overpowering fact which pressed upon the Indian mind. How to overcome it or escape from it was the one problem. The problem seems to have presented itself to Indian thought in a form at once extremely abstract and extremely intense. The same fact exists for all men at all times, and all men at all times have had the same problem before them. But other nations, whether in lightness of heart, or in practical activity, or in hopeless fatalism, have more or less put the question aside; and when they have dealt with it, they have been content to seek for partial solutions. How shall we be happy after death if not here? How shall we secure as large as possible a share of happiness along with the inevitable trouble? Most men have had enough of hopefulness to address themselves rather to the search for happiness than to the flight from pain.

All men, according to Aristotle, seek happiness. But the Indian Aryans of Gotama's day seem to have looked chiefly at the dark side; nor did they find in the universality of the fact of pain any reason for feeling it the less. They saw it in the most general and abstract form and yet felt it most intensely.

Gotama's first proposition, the first of the Four Noble (Aryan) Truths, amounted simply to this: Sorrow is universal. 'This, mendicants, is the noble truth of sorrow: birth is sorrow, old age is sorrow, sickness is sorrow, death is sorrow, the presence of the unloved is sorrow, the absence of the loved is sorrow, all that one wishes for and does not get is sorrow: briefly, the five elements by which beings hold to existence are sorrow.' This, in so far as it was true, was no new discovery; it was the frank acceptance of the facts; but in so far as it was new, in so far as it laid down, for the foundation of a system of conduct, the proposition that there is no bright side to things, it was a hideous falsehood. The statement was ambiguous, either obviously true or utterly false. We may suppose that it approved itself to many, and perhaps to Gotama's own mind, in consequence of its ambiguity. Only so regarded can it be regarded as a striking statement. It must cover some such transition of thought as this: 'Pain and suffering are indisputably an universal fact in human life: pain is the inseparable condition of all existence: all is pain.'

This conclusion one cannot too clearly denounce

as a falsehood ;—not only a way of looking at things which is hateful to us, but a categorical falsehood. There are such things as joy and good ; they are abundant on every side ; there is no existence altogether without them. This is as obviously true as it is that there is no earthly existence altogether separate from pain ; and the ambiguity which glides unperceived from the fact of suffering, which all admit, to the denial of all good in existence, marks a falsehood as unphilosophical as it is gloomy. This ambiguity must be supposed to have given to the 'First Truth' whatever force or novelty it possessed.* But it formed the logical starting-point of the whole system.

The Second 'Truth' is thus stated : 'This, mendicants, is the noble truth of the cause of sorrow. Desire' (literally 'thirst') 'that leads from birth to birth, and is accompanied by pleasure and pain, seeking its gratification here and there—namely, desire of sensual pleasure, desire of existence, desire of wealth.'¹ The general statement, that desire is the cause of sorrow, is here explained by the three-fold division of desire. Desire of sensual pleasure, desire of existence, desire of wealth (or whatever the phrase means).

¹ I have not ventured to go against Professor Oldenberg and Professor Rhys Davids here. They both take 'Vibhava' in the ordinary sense of 'power,' or 'prosperity.' But the Pali Commentaries say it is the lust which is encouraged by the expectation of annihilation at death,—the desire to 'eat and drink because to-morrow we die' (finally). 'Ucchedadiṭṭhi saḥagato rāgo vibhavatanhāti vuccati,' *Visuddhi Marg.* 'Ucchedadiṭṭhi saḥagatassa rāgassa etam adhivacanam,' *Saccavibhaṅg. Atthakath.*

The third of these I put out of sight (see note), and ask the reader's attention for what I have to say about the other two. This twofold aspect of 'desire,' as 'desire of sensual pleasure,' and 'desire of existence,' corresponds to a twofold aspect of the whole Buddhist system. The treatment of *sensual desire* as the cause of sorrow is the moral, practical, and from a strict Buddhist point of view, the superficial and commonplace, part of the system. The treatment of the *desire of existence* as the cause of sorrow is the metaphysical foundation of the system. The connection between the two is obscure, both in the second Truth and in the system at large.

That the desire for pleasure leads to sorrow, is a truth not peculiar to Buddhism, though it is duly insisted on in the Buddhist books. We shall see this abundantly hereafter. But that the desire of pleasure is the only and adequate cause of sorrow is, of course, untrue; and this the Buddhist writers clearly saw, attributing, as they do, at least as much evil to hatred. This, then, is only a part, and not the deepest part, of the meaning of the Second Truth.

The cause of sorrow is desire for existence; thirst for existence. This is the characteristic statement. This, in fact, is what connects the second Truth with the first: all existence, says the first Truth, is sorrow. All desire, says the second Truth, leads to renewed existence. It 'leads from birth to birth': it tends to perpetuate the series. In the light of what has been said above as to the view of life and re-

birth, the meaning of this is clear. Existence rests on combination, life rests on attachment to objects. Were there no contact with external objects, no contact of touch or thought, there could be no life. It is the grasping at outward objects, the clinging to them, which renders personal existence possible.

Further, it is that unextinguished craving after existence—perpetuated after death by the act-force of a man or other living thing—which brings about re-birth, and so sorrow.

The Third 'Truth' is but the necessary sequel of the second. The effect ceases when the cause ceases. The third 'Truth,' therefore, is, that the cessation of sorrow is effected by the eradication of desire.

Here, again, the words have a more obvious moral meaning, and a deeper and more characteristic metaphysical meaning. Obviously—and this forms a large part of the moral system of Buddhism—by diminution of the list of necessities, by detachment from all objects of desire, by the cultivation of indifference, a large class of pains would be avoided. But this is only one application of a principle, which seemed to Gotama to be universally true, and which, if it were true, would go far deeper than the region of mere pleasures and pains, would strike, as he thought it did, at the very roots of life—the principle that if desire for the root elements of being could be eradicated, if there were no clinging to those fundamental elements without which existence is impossible, then there would be no birth and no sorrow, because there would exist no

being to be born. The living creature, he seems to have argued, has a hold on life: it has grasped at the elements on which life depends. If only it can loose that grasp, if only it can shake off the longing which has hitherto made it grasp these foundations of life, then its further existence will be impossible. The sensual desires are but one manifestation of the craving for a hold on things: they are the first to be cast away; but far down below, nearer the central root of being, are links which must be broken, longings of an unconscious innate thirst for existence which must be extinguished, before a being can escape altogether from the dreary round of birth and death and birth.

Something like this, I believe, is the thought which was enshrined in these 'Truths.' It is carried into detail in another formula—the Chain of Causation; the series of causes which lead up from ignorance to sorrow.

The 'Chain of Causation'¹ is thus stated: 'From ignorance come conformations; from conformations comes consciousness; from consciousness come name and corporeal form; from name and corporeal form come the six fields (of sense); from the six fields comes contact (between the senses and their objects); from contact comes sensation; from sensation comes thirst (or desire); from desire comes clinging (to exist-

¹ I have followed Professor Oldenberg's translation. The word here rendered 'conformations' has many applications. The root means 'putting together,' and the branches of meaning in various and even opposite directions are innumerable.

ence); from clinging (to existence) comes being; from being comes birth; from birth come old age, and death, pain, and lamentation, suffering, anxiety, and despair. This is the origin of the whole realm of suffering.

‘But if ignorance be removed [by the complete extinction of desire], this brings about the removal of conformations; by the removal of conformations—and so on. This is the removal of the whole realm of suffering.’

‘It is utterly impossible,’ says Professor Oldenberg—and who will attack a metaphysical puzzle which he declares insoluble?—‘to trace from beginning to end a connected meaning in this formula.’ Even the ancient Buddhists, he tells us, ‘found here a stumbling-block.’ They offer no attempt to elucidate the earlier stages of it. Nor shall I follow the Professor even so far as he sees his way; but shall be content to touch on a few points.

1. Around the words ‘by the complete extinction of desire’ I have placed a bracket, because as they stand in the English they might mislead. They would appear only to put desire back behind ignorance as a still earlier and more ultimate cause; and thus upset the whole system. But there is no such impression conveyed by the original. The ‘desire’ here is not the ‘desire’ of the second truth, or the ‘thirst’ which occupies the eighth place in the chain.¹ The whole phrase, which in Pali is only part of a

¹ Rāgo, not tanhá.

word, refers to the practical method of extinguishing ignorance, or rather describes the character of the man in whom it is extinguished. The phrase must be omitted in considering the passage as a whole.

2. How consciousness leads to desire is not very difficult to understand. Certainly, if we were not conscious we should not be aware of objects ; and if not aware of them, should not desire them. This is a little more subtly put in the passage before us ; and on some of the links a little light is thrown by scattered passages in the books. Among the elements of being, or at any rate of life, is consciousness. The conscious being begins to identify outward things, gives them name and form ; outward things thus discriminated become the objects of the senses ; the organs of sense are brought into contact with them, and so sensation, a keen impression from the object, is conveyed to the mind, and the mind allowing that keen impression to affect it, is moved towards the object, and desires it.

How desire leads to the clinging, first to outward objects, and further and deeper down to the elements of life themselves, we have already seen.

3. Thus the whole statement, from the second link to the twelfth, may be read thus : The conscious being placed in the world of objects naturally tends to attach itself to them, and to create for itself a continuous series of relations to them by which its existence is perpetuated in a world of sorrow.

4. And now we can read the first link thus : ' This

is because it knows no better.' A being that knew that all existence is sorrow, and what causes sorrow, and how it can be destroyed, would allow none of these processes to take place. A wise man will detach himself from things, pay no attention to what comes before his senses, withdraw his mind from identifying names and forms till consciousness is gone (this is the process of moral self-restraint and meditation); then full insight into the nature and causes of things will burst upon him: ignorance will be removed, his life-elements will be dissolved, there will be no more consciousness or sensation, or desire or birth or sorrow for him.

If knowledge is the removal of ignorance, it must be ignorance that was at the root of all the evil.

These hints are, I confess, the best I can do towards giving a meaning to the Chain of Causation. In the Pali texts I have never met with any attempt to explain or even to illustrate either the particular sequences or the whole. A praiseworthy effort is made in one or two places to explain the idea of cause by illustrations. The effect and the cause are like two bundles resting against one another: as the rivers are affected by the sea, as fire arises from sticks, so do sorrow and pleasure arise from contact: as light without something to reflect it falls ineffective, so without pleasure and pain the whole Chain of Causation is null.¹

¹ Sanyut, xii. 63. 64. These and other illustrations are drawn out in the *Questions of Milinda*, S.B.E., vol. xxxv. p. 85, etc

And modern European writers have constructed many theories ; but I have never seen them appeal to any Pali text in their support, the plain reason being that the Pali texts do not touch the point.

We must suppose that the old writers considered the meaning and bearing as well as the truth of those formularies to be knowable only by that insight which comes at the end of the believer's course. Any one who knew these things would be in Nirvana !

The position of ignorance at the beginning of all, as the ultimate cause and active producer of evil, is thoroughly in accordance with the view always taken of ignorance, as if it were a positive force. From that which commends itself to every mind, the truth that men undergo much sorrow which with more knowledge they might have avoided, the Buddhist mind seems to have glided to the paradox, that it is out of ignorance that the whole world of suffering being has its origin.

Yet it is impossible to doubt—if we have any history of Gotama's views at all—that this appeared to him in the light of an ultimate and precious truth. He seemed to himself to see clearly all the steps by which ignorance begets birth and death. The sight of these was his inspiration, his Buddhahood. It sent him forth full of enthusiastic resolve to bring others to the same triumphant vision ; full of confidence that it would mean to others as much as it did to him. But in our ignorance of the meaning which the terms

bore to him, and of the habits of thought to which he addressed them, we cannot estimate the degree of truth—for some truth there must have been—which the formula conveyed.

But this, I think, we may say confidently : that to the majority of Buddhist teachers these great dogmas had no ascertained connection with conduct. They are never, to my knowledge, brought to bear upon it. There are innumerable passages which urge the destruction of lust or desire; but 'is there one in which the method recommended for destroying it is founded on its being the immediate effect of 'sensation'?'¹ Often as it is stated that sensation begets desire, I have met with no account of any instance of it, nor any illustration of the process.² Still less is the relation of consciousness to the 'fields of sense' brought to bear on conduct. The moral system as we find it in the books would lose nothing by the removal of the Four Truths and the Chain of Causation.

This isolation of the moral rules from these great principles is notably illustrated by that to which we

¹ For instance, in *Sanyut.* xii. 58, 'Name and form' is said to get a hold on the mind, not of the man who indulges 'consciousness,' but of him who finds pleasure in such things as the heresies, passions, and other 'bonds.' And the origin of 'consciousness' is attributed in the next chapter to the same 'bonds,' not to 'conformations.' And in the next, 'desire' (the cause in the series of 'clinging') is said to be produced by devotion to principles of 'clinging.' And all this in a series of passages specially occupied with the Chain of Causation. So in *Maj. Nik.* x. 60. 61, 'sensation,' 'clinging,' and the 'fields of sense' are treated without regard either to their order or their relation to one another in the chain.

² *Sanyut.* xii. 62, does go a little more closely into the production of sensation by touch, comparing it to the production of heat by fire-sticks.

have now to return : the Fourth Truth and the Eightfold Way.

The Fourth Truth is plain enough :

‘ This, O mendicants, is the noble truth of the way of living which leads to the extinction of sorrow : it is this noble Eightfold Way : right faith, right resolve, right speech, right action, right living, right effort, right recollectedness, right meditation.’¹

It may be briefly paraphrased thus : Desire is eliminated by following the general course of conduct taught by the Buddha. We are obliged to say ‘ the general course, etc., ’ because the Eightfold Way, constantly as it is praised, is never explained. Perhaps the terms refer to some system of early Buddhism, or some arrangement actually instituted by Gotama, of which all record is lost ; perhaps there was an intention to draw up such a system, which was never executed ; perhaps the word ‘ Eightfold ’ had some associations unknown to us ; but however that may be, there is no Eightfold Path to be found in the books, no eight branches of study or practice corresponding to the eight names. It is not enough to say that no one, but for this phrase, would ever have noticed in the Buddhist writings any such divisions or method as these eight names imply : the strictest search fails to discover any such divisions or method. (See Note on Eightfold Way.)

The doctrine that it is the Middle Way is, though often named, rarely stated, and still more rarely

¹ On the exact meaning of this term, see note on p. 94.

explained, illustrated, or dwelt upon. Sometimes Gotama's system is explained to be a way middle between the extremes of austerity and indulgence; sometimes a middle between the assertion and the denial of certain metaphysical positions. The Middle Way is another instance of a Buddhist formula which has played no real part in the thought of the writers of the books.

One is sometimes almost inclined to conclude that there has been an amalgamation of two originally distinct and separate Buddhisms; one the Buddhism of the formulas, the other the practical moral system.

But there is a real and deep-lying link which binds the two together. The moral system is founded on a principle which is closely akin to the 'Truths' and the 'Causes.' It is the principle of impermanence. The exclamation, *Aniccá vata sankhára*,¹ 'Ah! composite things are not eternal! How transitory are all component things!' expresses as truly the teaching of Gotama as do the Truths themselves, though it is not, so far as I have read, ever attributed to him, but always to his followers. The sentiment which it expresses is simpler and truer than the 'First Truth,' and much better calculated to influence conduct. Upon it, not upon the Truths, Buddhist morality is founded.

The result of all this will have been, I think, to

¹ *Aniccá vata mayam*: 'We are all transitory,' cry all beings in panic when the lion-like Buddha utters his voice, *Angut. iv. 33*. It is the essential principle, *Maj. Nik. 35*.

convince the reader that elaborate metaphysical theories play a smaller part in the Buddhism of the books than he had been led to suppose. It appears that the link between the Four Truths and the moral system is little more than artificial.

But it is difficult to overrate the connection between the moral method and the doctrine of impermanence. On the conviction that all things are impermanent depends that sense of distaste, which drives men to lead ascetic lives, to enter the Community, or if laymen, to prepare for death by obtaining merit. To awaken and maintain that sense of distaste are instituted all the processes of meditation, especially the favourite one on the foulness of the body; and the rules of the Community, especially as to the character and use of the few necessities of their life, are directed to the same end. Closely connected with the impermanence of outward objects is the unreality of the personal self—a doctrine which has practically influenced the moral system, and one which is a special topic of meditation.

It is only, then, if we consider the Four Truths and the Twelve Causes as being generally represented by the formula, '*Aniccá vata sankhárá,*' that we shall find it true to say that the moral system rests on the metaphysical foundation.

To put the practical system shortly, Buddhism teaches: That if men cling to objects, and thence are guilty of lust and hatred and pride, it is because they are ignorant that those objects are impermanent;

while by the knowledge of their impermanence men become detached from objects, and their (evil) passions are eradicated. This detachment will be the subject of the next chapter.

NOTE ON THE EIGHT-FOLD WAY

The Eight-fold Way, though constantly alluded to, is seldom treated under its eight heads. It is stated in *Maha Vagga*, i. 6, 18, 22, named in *ib.* vii. 6, but not, I think, afterwards referred to in the *Vinaya*; just named in *Dhammapada* i. 20, p. 67; so in § 13 of *Kassapa Sihanāda S. Digh. Nik.* p. 165; so in *Sanyut.* xii. 27, *et pass.* In *Angut.* iv. 34 it is one of a tetrad with the Buddha Doctrine and Community. There is no place in the *Pitakas* in which these eight are so treated as to form a complete classification, under eight heads, of the whole Buddhist method. In the *Visakha Sutta*, or part of the *Cullavedabba Sutta* of *Majjhima Nikaya* (p. 300 *Trenckn.*), they are grouped in relation to (1) Knowledge, 'right belief,' being concerned with the apprehension of knowledge, and 'right resolution' with its application; (2) Conduct, 'right conduct, speech, livelihood,' being connected with moral conduct; (3) Meditation, 'right effort, recollection, recollectedness,' being concerned with meditation. This is the only attempt I have seen to exhibit them as embracing the whole system.

In the *Suttanta* division of *Sutta Vibhanga* (of the *Abhidhamma Pitaka*) they are thus explained: 'Right belief' is knowledge or intellectual grasp of the Four Truths. 'Right resolution' is carrying out this knowledge in a two-fold way, viz. by leaving the world (*nekhamma*), and by meek and friendly conduct. 'Right speech' is avoiding falsehood, slander, abuse, and chattering. Right conduct is avoiding three other of the five precepts, that is, avoiding taking life, stealing, and sexual sin. 'Right livelihood' is the reverse of 'wrong livelihood' (*micchājīvo*), and is elsewhere defined as being distinguished from that of the poor who take life from necessity, and that of princes who take life from pride.¹ (The proper

¹ But *Micchajīvo* seems to be used in *Culla Vagga*, i. 14, for all kinds of ill ways of spending time, both by word and deed; especially such as games, etc. Wrongly rendered, I think, in *Sacred Books*, vol. xi., 'lying ways of living.'

livelihood is either that of a monk, or that of a cultivator or of a merchant, as these are supposed not to involve taking life.) 'Right effort' is four-fold, as it aims at (1) the destruction of demerit which has been acquired, (2) avoiding the acquirement of future demerit, (3) the acquirement of new merit, (4) the increase of merit by (a) not losing it, (b) increasing it.¹ The terms describing this effort are such as imply successively the aim, the undertaking, the setting one's-self in order for carrying it out (as a man takes up the reins and gets his horses in hand in order to drive), and, finally, exertion. 'Right recollectedness' is knowing and seeing clearly the true character and condition of (1) the body, (2) the emotions, and (3) the mind. This is not properly called 'meditation'; it is more properly 'thoughtfulness' or 'mindfulness,' as rendered by Rhys Davids. 'Right meditation' is the four-fold method of 'jhānam,' in which the five 'coverings' are successively removed, and five grades of contemplation, ending in 'unity' or complete collectedness, are achieved.

Elsewhere they are generally only named (as in *Sanyut.* xiv. 28).

A notable instance is *Sanyut.* iii. 2, 7, 8, where the question 'How does good company lead in the eight-fold way?' is answered thus: 'It promotes right belief, right resolution, right conduct, and right effort.' In other places the eight, or some of them, are applied as categories from the particular point of view which the writer is taking. In *Majjhima Nikaya*, lx. p. 402 *ad fin.*, right belief, resolution, speech, are treated as one series, opposed to three stages of heresy. 'Sammāditthi,' by itself, is constantly and abundantly enlarged on, so is 'Sammavāco' in connection with the prohibition of falsehood. S. Sati, in *Angut.* iv. 30, is opposed to *muttha sati* and *asampajānasati*, and S. Samādhi to 'asamāhito,' 'vibbhanta citto.' The only allusion found to S. *Sāṅkappo* is in *Angut.* iv. 353, where, however, it is not so called.

In *Sanyut.* xii. 65, this 'way' is compared to an ancient road to an ancient city, made by men of old, which has now been found, repaired and built. The Buddhas of old trod this way; Gotama, in his wanderings, found it.

The phrase is thus a famous title for the Buddha system, but no special teaching is conveyed by it.

Outside the *Pitaka*, an elaborate but artificial explanation is

¹ See on S. *Vāyámó* *Angut.* N. iv. 13, where there is the same four-fold division.

given by Buddhaghosha in Sumang-Vil. i. *ad fin.* p. 314. 'Right belief' is fully discussed, and then each of the remaining seven is treated in its effect upon the rest of the character (Sahajāte dhamme). S. Sankappo tests, S. Vāco grasps, S. Kammanto originates, S. 'Ajivo purifies, S. Vāyāmo exerts, S. Sati fixes, S. Samādhī unifies. This is not an interpretation of the system, but an ingenious application of the terms from a given point of view.

There are occasional variations : for instance in Angut. iv. 14. 30, S. Sati and S. Samādhī form, with 'ungreed' and 'unhate,' four Dhammapadas. In Angut. iv. 31 we have Sammāpasādhī, 'right aim,' equivalent, I suppose, to Sammā Sankappo.

CHAPTER IX

MORAL SYSTEM

Disgust and Detachment

I HAVE already alluded to the dislike, which Gotama is represented as expressing, for metaphysical and psychological, and even for astronomical or geographical studies and discussions. The reason assigned for his disparagement of them is, that they do not tend to produce dissatisfaction (*nibbidā*).¹

Dissatisfaction, or disgust, for so it may properly be rendered, is not only an intellectual conviction that there is no permanent satisfaction to be found in anything, since all things are impermanent, but also a positive shrinking from them; such a strong feeling as sends the man away from his home and his pleasures, crying, 'How repulsive these things are, now I see them in their true light!' It is under the impulse of this feeling that a man joins—such is the theory—the Buddhist Community. In its stronger form it is the motive of *pabbajja*, the going out from house life into the religious life; in lower degrees it leads the layman, though he does not leave house-life,

¹ Sanyut. xii. 61; D. N. ix. 33.

to sit loose to his wealth, and seek only how he may attain merit by giving it away, to seek in what field he may most profitably *sow* the wealth he no longer cares to keep. We read that when Yasa, the rich young man who had been delicately nurtured with three several palaces for the three seasons, saw the unseemly appearance of the sleeping women, 'the danger of it all became clear to him, and his mind was disgusted, and he cried, "Oh! how distressing! Oh! how dangerous!"'¹

Gotama himself—he is represented in the sacred books as saying—was led to 'go forth' by the same emotion. He used to consider with himself the fact of age, disease, etc., until, determined to escape them, he left his weeping parents, etc. Of this, the well-known story of the prince's driving through the town, and seeing the old man, the sick man, and the corpse, is a later amplification. It was an almost inevitable embodiment of the recognised law, by which the wish for *pabbajja*, the resolve to become a mendicant, was supposed to be excited by disgust at old age, disease, and death. 'Seeing others afflicted, seeing men seized with desire, tormented and overcome by decay, so shalt thou be heedful and leave desire behind, and so never return to existence.'²

The object most calculated, in Buddhist view, to produce this disgust, is the human body itself, living as well as dead. One of the commonplaces or stock formulas which constantly recur—is the enumeration

¹ M. V. i. 7; *supra*, p. 47.

² Sutt. Nip. v. 17; *S.B.E.* x. 17, p. 209.

of the thirty-two impurities of the body : its secretions and excretions are to be separately and minutely contemplated, attention is to be paid to its separate parts and tissues, bone, skin, nerve, and blood, the internal organs, each in turn, till the man is disgusted with himself. He is recommended also to observe a corpse, first newly dead, then cast out in the burial ground, then in each stage of putrescence, and all the loathsome accompaniments of decay.

The reader may look at Sutta Nipat, i. 11, in *Sacred Books of the East*, x. b 32, or at the less disgusting, but less typical, passage in Dhammap. xi. 2 ; *Sacred Books of the East*, x. a 41. 'Look at this dressed-up lump, covered with wounds . . . wasted, full of sickness, and frail. This heap of corruption breaks to pieces . . . these white bones . . . what pleasure is there in looking at them ?'

This sort of mental exercise is not only highly commended, but regarded as typical of all meditation. It is given in several places as the specimen of right effort of mind or meditation, not, I suppose, as being the best, but as the commonest and most elementary ; e.g., 'a man should do his best when a good point of meditation has occurred to him to keep it before his mind : such as the idea of a skeleton, a corpse eaten by worms, a corpse turning blue, festering, splitting up, blown out with decay.'¹

'All evil passions proceed from the body.' Buddha said : 'Passion and hatred have their origin

¹ Angut. iv. 14, *et passim*.

thence ; dislike and liking and terror are born thence : thence doubts arise which vex the mind as boys do a crow.'¹ 'The dissolution of one's own body is seen by the noble ones to be joy.'² • •

Among the few traces of any methods of meditation which survive in actual practice in Ceylon, is the recitation, by each young novice, when he is invested with the yellow robe, of the verses which enumerate these thirty-two impurities of the body.

I cannot but remark on the degrading effect which must follow on the encouragement of such a view of the human body. I know that there have been, in the morbid development of Christian asceticism, no small excesses in the same direction ; but they have been morbid and exceptional. There is room for a true disgust, which may ennoble a man. It was the sight, momentary and unsought, of the pitiable decay of a human body which had been clothed a little before in beauty and pride, that aroused the 'dissatisfaction' or 'disgust' that sent Ignatius Loyola to a life of self-sacrifice. But to dwell long and frequently on the ignoble aspects of our bodily nature, is base, and a treason to humanity. One's manhood resents it. It is refreshing to contrast the healthy and manly tone in which Shakespeare can both acknowledge all the weakness of our poor bodies, and stand in awe-struck admiration too at their nobleness

¹ Sutt. Nip. ii. 5.

² Sutt. Nip. iii. 12 ; Maj. Nik. x. *et pass.*—Such meditation is urged continually.

Science has taught us indeed to see, even in the several organs and the processes of flesh and blood, nothing but what is wonderful and admirable ; but the Jewish Psalmist—before the days of the microscope—had struck the highest tone of all, when he thought how his body, from the first, had been fashioned by its Maker, fearfully and wonderfully made.

And if the Christian is ever led to say, as Barrow does in one instance speak (comparing it with the reasonable soul) of 'this feculent lump of organised clay, our body,' yet he teaches us to thank God for (vol. i. p. 200) 'a comely body framed by His curious artifice, various organs fitly proportioned, situated and tempered, for strength, ornament, and motion,' etc., by Him who, 'by His kind disposal, furnishes our palates with variety of delicious fare, entertains our eyes with pleasant spectacles, ravishes our ears with harmonious sounds, perfumes our nostrils with fragrant odours, cheers our spirits with comfortable gales,' etc.¹

In Buddhism the way of treating the body never varies, so far as I know, from the base point of view which I have described. But there are other considerations, more philosophical and less sensuous, by which 'Nibbidá' is excited, and the disgust with the impermanence of things rises, as in the case of *Gótama himself, to a 'noble discontent.'

Once convinced that all things are transitory, and

¹ Augustine taught, and Aquinas confirms (Summ. ii. 2. 9. 4), that 'Scientia' corresponds to the Beatitude of those who mourn, as showing the worthlessness of creatures. Comfort, they teach, comes by the knowledge of the Creator.

anxious to maintain and deepen that conviction, the Buddhist disciple will aim at detaching himself more and more from them: he will carefully avoid giving any object a hold upon him, or allowing himself to take hold of, or rest upon, any external thing. To this end he will guard his senses with the utmost care. The sphere of each sense will be to him a region of danger, and he will be constantly on the watch lest either sense should form a link between him and its object; lest any pleasure or pain should be allowed to establish itself in his consciousness in consequence of the contact of eye, ear, tongue, nose, or thought, with anything seen, or heard, or tasted, or smelt, or thought of.

He is recommended, for this purpose, not to observe—the rules generally take their form from the sense of sight—any detail or characteristic of any object. He should not know, for instance, when he sees a figure, whether it is a man or a woman, whether the object before him is a stone or a mango, a good mango or a bad, lest observing details he should linger on them, and attachment be produced. A curious play on words gives point to this advice. A mark, or characteristic detail, is called in Páli, ‘nimittaṃ;’ and in regard to this, its strict logical meaning, the disciple should not ‘apprehend details,’ not be *nimittagāhí*. But the same word had a popular use in reference to the marks of female beauty, and *nimittagāhí* then stands for ‘falling in love.’ The disciple is to avoid being captivated by

the charms of any object. He must cultivate abstraction, lest attention to details should give room for desire.¹ (A logical method is treated as the means of a moral result.) On the other hand, from another point of view, accurate knowledge of things—viz., of their impermanence—is held to prevent attachment to them.²

In the treatment of this subject we meet with a praiseworthy effort to grapple with the practical problem, and to trace the evil of lust to its earliest manifestations, to cut up, as the books constantly say, the root of it. This analysis demands as much admiration as any part of the Buddhist system. The wise man, when any object, which addresses either of the senses comes in contact with his eye, his ear, or other sense, does not notice any point or detail. If he noticed any point or detail in the object presented to his sense, he would be led to dwell on it, to be engrossed by it, to desire it. He guards his senses therefore; and knowing that (sensuous) contact is a link in the chain that leads to sorrow, he covers up his sense and shuts out the impressions. If they assail him he says to himself, 'This is a vain impression, the effect of an unreal appearance of things, which have no permanent being,' and so he throws it off.

A still more subtle way of treating the matter, though less practical, is important, as it has determined the forms of expression which are common in the

¹ Saman. S. 64.

² Maj. Nik. I, 4.

books, and explains, to some extent, the position of 'name and form' in the Chain of Causation.

What assails the sense is an individual object, not an abstraction. It owes its capacity for assailing the sense to its being definite and particular, and to its being recognised as such. Now when once the mind has identified an object, realised its form and given it name, the mind has committed itself to the influence of that object, has attached itself to it. In order then to be free from the dominion of external objects, we must refuse to identify, we must not compare them, letting the mind pass from one to the other and dwell on each in turn. We must withdraw attention more and more from particular objects of sense, till there is no perception of differences, till we are conscious only of a formless universe, of a colourless infinite, till the idea even of finite or infinite is lost, till no idea whatever remains. This is the intellectual, as the other was the moral abstraction.

In another point of view, which is often taken, detachment from external objects is treated more practically. The cause of sorrow, or one great cause of it, is the absence of desired or loved objects, or the loss of what we love. Things that are loved are the cause of sorrow, whether in seeking and not attaining them, or in having had and losing them. To be indifferent, desiring nothing, to meditate on the worthlessness of all and so to care for none, without want of clothes, food, possessions, this is the happy state.

The sage was great who sat lost in thought while a hundred carts went by so close that the dust was on his robe.¹ But Gotama boasted a greater calm, for while the elements shook around him, and thunder roared and lightning bolts flashed on every side, he had been unconscious of the storm.

It is to secure this detachment, and to procure the training of this character, unhampered by either possessions or disturbances, that wise men find home life too cramped,² and go out into the free, open-air life of him who has nothing to lose. They desire to be like the solitary rhinoceros, to sail away like the swan,³ and be at peace. A multitude of other similes are employed to illustrate the same point.

The monk who has thus overcome desire has cut the strap, the thong, the chain, the bar: he has dammed up the waters; crushed the snake; cut down the forest; he is firm as a pillar; he does not go out like a lamp (quite a different point of view from that in which the metaphor is used of Nirvana); the arrow is drawn out of his wound; the streams are dried; he is like a well-thatched house which no rain can enter. No fuel is added to the fire, or oil to the lamp of lust, the hot vessel is cooled, the tree rooted up. Dearest image of all, he is like⁴ the pure lotus leaf to which no water can cling.

The preciousness of seclusion and solitude, and its

¹ Parinibb. Sutta.

² Maha Vagga, v. 1. 9.

³ S. N. i. 3. 6; D. N. i. 7. 27.

⁴ See Sutta Nipat, ii. 3; Udan. lxxv.; Sanyut. xii. 51. 18; 52. 3; 53. 3; 55. 5, etc.

necessity to the attainment of insight, form the subject of innumerable sermons, and a large number of Jataka stories are devoted to illustrating it.¹

The finished monk will have no impulses to bad or good. Love itself, in its active sense, he will avoid. He will be without desire, cultivating only calm.²

It is with a view to this detachment that the monk is to have no belongings beyond the four requisites, clothing, food, bedding, and medicine, and these are to be of the simplest and least desirable kind. And with these he is to be content.³

While he uses each, he is to make a special effort of self-recollection (*sati*), reminding himself that he takes them only as necessities and that he does not cling to them. As he takes up his robe he is to say to himself, 'I take this merely to protect my body from heat and cold and other inconveniences,' and thus incalculable merit is attained. 'If a monk in the use of his robe, his alms-food, his dwelling, his medicines and condiments, exercises unlimited recollectedness of mind, unlimited in each of those cases will be his accumulation of good deeds and merits, and reward of joy, bliss-producing, heaven-ensuring, leading to all delight and joy, and happiness, and pleasure, and bliss.' It is as impossible to calculate the quantity of merit in each of these acts as to calculate the waters in the sea.⁴

It is natural at first sight to compare this search

¹ See Akankh. Sutta, *S.B.E.* xi. 210, etc.

² Dh. i. 16, p. 56; S. N. v. 14-206; S. N. iv. 10, p. 162.

³ Angut. iv. 12. 25. 26.

⁴ Angut. iv. li.

for retirement with that of the Christian monk, and even to compare the 'detachment' of the Buddhist with that of the Christian. And there have no doubt been Christian monks whose solitude was no better than this. But if the two *ideals* are to be compared—and that is what is to our present purpose—it will at once appear that the contrast is more important than the resemblance; for the Buddhist's solitude is a withdrawal from all things to nothing, the Christian's, from all other things to God.

In seeking for freedom by diminishing the number of necessities, and for opportunity by seclusion and leisure, the Christian ascetic agrees with the Buddhist. But they differ *toto cælo* in their views both of what they leave and what they seek. The Buddhist leaves the world and mortifies the body because he thinks them worthless or even evil in themselves; the Christian leaves the world because he himself is sinful, and liable through his own fault to make a bad use of God's good creatures; and in leaving them he feels that he sacrifices them to God. Still more striking is the contrast in regard to what each seeks. The Christian would go, if he could, away from every created thing, that he might go to God, the One and infinite Good. He strives to shut the senses, to shut out the world, to forget self, because he has in view an infinite field for the exercise of all his faculties upon a perfect object. The Buddhist would, in theory, withdraw his faculties from all exercise whatever.¹

¹ But see in the next chapter a better aspect of this in application to practice.

It is impossible to imagine a greater interval between two ideals, for the interval is strictly infinite; between that which contains only the negative, and that which adds to it the infinite positive.

Here is the climax of Buddhist attainment :—

‘ Then the Blessed One entered into the first stage of deep meditation. And rising out of the first stage he passed into the second. And rising out of the second he passed into the third. And rising out of the third stage he passed into the fourth. And rising out of the fourth stage of deep meditation he entered into the state of mind to which the infinity of space is alone present. And passing out of the mere consciousness of the infinity of space he entered into the state of mind to which the infinity of thought is alone present. And passing out of the mere consciousness of the infinity of thought he entered into a state of mind to which nothing at all was specially present. And passing out of the consciousness of no special object he fell into a state between consciousness and unconsciousness. And passing out of the state between consciousness and unconsciousness he fell into a state in which the consciousness both of sensations and of ideas had wholly passed away.’¹

Contrast with this the Christian aspiration.

‘ If to any the tumult of the flesh were hushed, hushed the images of earth, and waters, and air, hushed also the poles of heaven, yea the very soul be hushed to herself, and by not thinking on self,

¹ Parinibb. Sutta, in *Sacred Books*, vol. xi.

surmount self, hushed all dreams and imaginary revelations, every tongue and every sign, and whatsoever exists only in transition, since if any could hear, all these say, We made not ourselves, but He made us that abideth for ever. If then having uttered this, they too should be hushed, having roused only our ears to Him Who made them, and He alone speak, not by them, but by Himself, that we may hear His Word, not through any tongue of flesh, nor Angel's voice, nor sound of thunder, nor in the dark riddle of a similitude, but, might hear Whom in these things we love, might hear His Very Self without these (as we two now strained ourselves, and in swift thought touched on that Eternal Wisdom, which abideth over all) ;—could this be continued on, and other visions of kind far unlike be withdrawn, and this one ravish, and absorb, and wrap up its beholder amid these inward joys, so that life might be for ever like that one moment of understanding which now we sighed after ; were not this, Enter into thy Master's joy ?' ¹

NOTE ON TRANSMIGRATION.

The idea of an endless succession of lives, through which every individual is passing, occupies a prominent place in Buddhist thought. The disciple is encouraged to dwell upon this idea until the mere sense of weariness from contemplating so interminable a series arouses his disgust. Sickening at the sight, he resolves to have nothing to do with those external objects, or even with those

¹ St. Augustine, *Confessions*, Bk. ix. (Oxford translation).

internal acts of consciousness, with which the tedious rotation of birth and death is associated.

It is not the idea of retribution, by the transmigration of a greedy man into a hog, etc., nor even that of variety, in one being passing through many forms (though both these ideas are admitted), but it is the idea of *weary interminableness* which is the ruling aspect of transmigration in Buddhist thought. The books labour to excite this idea by a multitude of illustrations, of which a number are collected in the fifteenth book of Sanyutta Nikaya.

If a piece of clay the size of a jujube seed were taken to represent your father, another similar one your grandfather, a third his father, and so on, the whole earth would be used up before the series was exhausted. The tears each man has shed over his fathers amount to more water than all the oceans. Every one has been every one's father, mother, son, etc. Certain ascetics were told that the blood they had shed when slaughtered as oxen, goats, birds, dogs, etc., or the blood they had shed when having their hands cut off as thieves, exceeded all the waters of all the seas. The bones of one individual in the course of an 'age' (Kalpa) make a great mountain. A Kalpa is so long that if a solid mountain were lightly brushed with a cloth once in a hundred thousand years, it would be worn away long before a single Kalpa was exhausted.¹ Yet we are told that few beings in proportion are born again as men; they are as a nailful of dust to the whole earth.² Man is hurried through this series of lives by a mechanical necessity. He 'falls' out of one life into another, according to his deeds, as a stick thrown into the air inevitably falls, whether it fall on one end or on the other, or on the middle (Sanyut. xv. 9 *et passim*).

Is there not good reason then to be disgusted with the round of lives in which beings run their weary and endless course? And is it not worth while to get free from it?

As soon as one sees the cause of it all—that death is due to birth, and birth to being, etc.—sees, in fact, the principle that suffering is inevitably associated with existence,—then, one is free. Once seen, the evil principle has no longer hold on a man. He is 'knowledge-freed.' The mass of past sorrow is incalculable, but

¹ On the length of a Kalpa, and its beginning and ending, see Angut. iv. 159.

² Sanyut. xx. 2. For the size of the world, see Angut. iv. 45.

that which remains to one who has taken the first step in the Buddhist course is insignificant.¹

With these ideas are connected two of the most celebrated and most striking of the Buddhist utterances; that said to have been uttered by Gotama at the moment of his attaining the insight, 'Anekajātisansāram,' etc., and the less elaborate one, which is represented as bursting from the lips of learner after learner, as he comes to see the transitoriness of all (compounded) things, and the necessity of their decay. The latter may be thus translated:—

' All things² are unabiding,
Birth, death—their law is this :
They come to birth ; they perish ;
End all,³ and that is bliss.'

(In spite of the poetical grandeur of the former passage, 'through the series of many births have I run, etc.,' and in spite of the old grammatical forms in it, I think it belongs to a comparatively late stage of the Pitaka literature. It is an elaborate collection of stereotyped metaphors. The identification of the 'house-maker,' or *karma*, with Māra (to whom the phrase 'dittho si,' 'thou art seen through,' is regularly applied), is alien to the earlier ideas of Maha Vagga. The metaphor of the house and rafters, though often found in later Suttas, is not in the Vinaya.)

¹ Sanyut. xiii. i. 2, where this is stupidly multiplied into eleven similar chapters, as the 'Uddānaṃ' naïvely states.

² 'Things.' Strictly, 'things made up by composition of elements.' Except by this paraphrase the word cannot be translated by any narrower word than 'things.'

³ Literally, 'their sinking to rest' is bliss.

CHAPTER X

THE VICES

THE cultivation of solitude is habitually recommended in the Buddhist books, as I have said in the last chapter, with a view to unmeaning, and, indeed, impossible states of abstraction. And this is always treated as the higher way, and to this the advanced disciple aspires, leaving behind him, as if it were merely a preliminary achievement, the rooting out of passion. This earlier stage, however, of the moral course is the only part which is of practical value, and, happily—though it has not the chief place in the great Suttas—it is not overlooked. The passages which keep upon this lower or more true level, and deal with the eradication of ordinary passions, place the principle of ‘detachment’ in a much more favourable light.

The disciple who keeps in view the impermanence of things and has no attachment to them will neither desire nor resent. He wants nothing, and nothing hurts him. Lust, therefore, and hatred and anger are got rid of. One of the best parts of the Buddhist morality, on the side of the avoidance of what is bad,

is the part which deals with the destruction of lust, spite, and the other evil ways or evil conditions; of anger, pride, and the love of pleasure and gain. Lust or passion and spite or hatred are the two principal of these, but to these stupidity and fear are generally added. The usual formula is represented by the lines :—

‘Whoso transgresses right, by lust, by hatred, by stupidity, or
by fear,
His reputation wangs away like the moon in the dark half of
the month.’¹

Sometimes a more general word, ‘Passion’ (Rágo), is substituted for ‘lust,’ and sometimes for ‘fear’ we find ‘pride.’² ‘Stupidity’ here means originally ‘confusion of mind,’ the want of self-respect and self-command which goes with a bad conscience and with loss of reputation. Occasionally, however, it is taken as denseness and inability to see into the profounder truths; this is an application of it to the case of monks.³ In the Maha Vagga there is a curious account of the way in which a certain Sona, who had attained to perfect insight, thought fit to display to the Buddha (‘modestly and without obtruding self’) the proof of his attainment. The point which he chose for his dissertation was this: That the ill conditions, of which he enumerated only three, passion, hatred, and stupidity (Rhys Davids here renders it ‘delusions’), are not eradicated for the sake of faith,

¹ Angut. iv. 17, *et passim*.

² Angut. iv. 66 (Rágo . . . máno); Angut. iv. 117 (Rágo . . . mado).

³ Angut. iv. 158.

or for the sake of reputation and being welcomed and entertained, or for the sake of merit; in the accomplished disciple these evil conditions are simply absent; he has ceased to need any motive for resisting them; they do not exist for him at all.¹ This exposition of Sona's was highly approved by the Buddha.

In the oldest passages² 'fear' is seldom, if ever, introduced, though it is very likely that the four-fold division, in which 'fear' is included, is older than Buddhism, and applied originally to the duties of kings and judges. In the latest books definitions and illustrations of the four ill-conditions abound.

Another cognate classification is that of the five Nivāranas or Hindrances: greed, malice, sloth, pride, and doubt.³ This is somewhat more technical and characteristically Buddhist than the last. Still more technical is the classification under four Yogas,⁴ or 'attachments,' those of love of pleasure, love of existence, false doctrine, and ignorance. 'There are four attachments, mendicants. What are the four? The attachment of the love of sensual pleasure, that of the love of existence, that of heresy, that of ignorance.' What, mendicants, is the attachment of the love of pleasure? When a person does not recognise in their true nature the up-coming and the down-going of sensual pleasures, the enjoyment of them, the danger of them, and the way out of them—

¹ *Maha Vagga*, v. 1. 20.

² *e.g.* *Maha Vagga*, vi. 31. 6 and above.

³ *Dig. Nig.* ii. (*Samaññaphala Sutta*) 68, p. 71.

⁴ *Angut.* iv. 10, etc.

in him who knows not all these, in regard to the objects of sensual pleasures, there is a sickness for pleasure,¹ a delight in pleasure, a love of pleasure, a fainting for pleasure, a thirst for pleasure, a fever for pleasure, which is sunk in pleasure, and goes along with the desire for pleasure—that is called, mendicants, the attachment of the love of sensual pleasure.’¹

The same sentence is then repeated, with ‘existence’ and ‘heresy’ in turn, in the place of ‘pleasure.’ In the fourth sentence the ‘six regions of contact,’ that is, the objects of sense and imagination, are substituted for ignorance.² What was a forcible and appropriate sentence in its original application becomes somewhat unmeaning in these forced applications.

Distinct again from these, and more concise and exhaustive, is the classification of defects under the heads of the three, or the four, corruptions or *ásavas*, Love of Pleasure, Love of Existence, Heresy, and Ignorance. These technical classifications are not consistent with one another in regard to the order in which they place the different vices, but there is one which purports definitely to assign the order in which each vice is rooted out by the disciple. This is the list of the Ten Bonds, by which men are bound to continued existence.³

The first three are of the nature of heresies, belief in one’s own personal existence and claims,

¹ Or should we read ‘passion for pleasure,’ ‘*Kámarágo*’?

² Angut. iv. 10.

³ See Childers, *Dictionary*, s.v. *Yogo* and *Samyojanañi*.

doubts, misuse of low kinds of religious rites ; these are the first faults to be got rid of. The two next are love of pleasure and hatred, while the other five, the suppression of which is the highest moral attainment, are passion for what has form, passion for what has not form, pride (of honour), pride (of attainment), and ignorance. The reader will see in this a certain advance in analysis. The disciple must first desire to shake off personal existence, and must be a convinced follower of Buddha, rejecting all Brahmanical and superstitious rites ; he will then grapple with the more obvious and grosser vices, lust and hatred ; but the eradication of more spiritual faults will come later, and the destruction of ignorance, by direct insight, or knowledge, comes last of all. At the same time, we observe, that in regard especially to the position assigned to intellectual defects, heresy and doubt, this method differs from the rest. It is evident that different Suttas and, to some extent, different books of the Pitakas, represent different systems of teaching and different stages of analysis.

We find two modes of grouping mixed together, for instance, in the following passage. It contains a clear statement of the Four Stages of attainment, or Four Paths, to which I shall refer later on.

‘Is it for the sake of realising these exercises of meditation that mendicants lead the religious life under the Buddha ?’

‘No, Maháli, it is not,’ etc.¹ ‘There are other

¹ In all these places the original repeats the whole sentence.

principles higher and more advanced than these, for the sake of realising which mendicants lead the religious life under me.'

• 'What are these?' etc.

'By destruction of the three bonds a mendicant becomes "entered into the stream," and can never fall to a lower condition, is fixed (in the right way), is certainly destined to the attainment of perfect knowledge. This, Mahali, is one of the higher and more advanced principles,' etc.

'Again, further, Mahali: a mendicant, by the destruction of the three bonds, and by reduction (to a minimum) of Passion, Hate, and Stupidity (or confusion),¹ becomes a "Once-comer"—after one return to this world he will make an end of sorrow. This, Mahali,' etc.

'Again, further, Mahali: a mendicant, by destruction of the five bonds which belong to this side,² becomes "supernatural,"—he enters into Nirvana direct from an upper world; he cannot return to this world. This,' etc.

'Further, again, Mahali: by destruction of the corruptions, a mendicant attains even in this world by his own knowledge and direct insight the emancipation of the mind, the corruptionless emancipation of pure knowledge. This is,' etc.

'These, Mahali, are the higher and more ad-

¹ Stupidity is out of place here.

² Concerning only life in this and some other lower worlds—that of the lower gods, etc.

vanced principles, for the sake of realising which mendicants lead the religious life under me.'

'Is there, Sir, a way, is there a course, for the realisation of these principles (or conditions)?'

'There is, Mahali, a way,' etc.

'What, Sir, is the way?' etc.

'It is this sacred Eightfold Way, namely, Right Belief,' etc. 'This, Mahali, is the way, this the course, for the realisation of these conditions.'¹

A division still more plain and untechnical is that of Act, Word, and Thought. This is often repeated, but little use is made of it. I have seen no passage which touched on the relation of thought to word and to action. As a rule, the distinction is used only to subdivide, without illustrating, the other groups. For instance, in the treatment of anger, we read: ²—

'Beware of bodily anger, and control thy body! Leave the sins of the body: with thy body practise virtue.

'Beware of the anger of the tongue, and control thy tongue,' etc.

'Beware of the anger of the mind, and control,' etc.

A much better use of the distinction is found³ where unchastity is reckoned as the defilement of the body; lying, slander, and abuse as the defilement of the tongue; and lust, malice, sloth, pride, and doubt as the defilement of the mind.

¹ Mahāli Sutta, D. N. vi. p. 156.

² Dh. 231; *Sacred Books of the East*, x. p. 59A.

³ Angut. iii. 119. 1.

But it is time to have done with these lists and enumerations. They cannot be omitted, for they form a very large part of the whole. But I will try to show what flesh there is on these bones.

It is by its condemnation of hatred and ill-will that the Buddhist morality (of the books) is most popularly and favourably known. Such passages as the following it is a pleasure to quote :—

‘He who holds back anger like a rolling chariot, him I call a real driver ; other people are but holding the reins.

‘Let a man overcome anger by love, let him overcome evil by good ; let him overcome the greedy by liberality, the liar by truth.’¹

‘Him I call a Brahmana who is tolerant with the intolerant, mild with fault-finders, and free from passion among the passionate.

‘Him I call a Brahmana from whom anger and hatred, pride and envy, have dropped like a mustard seed from the point of a needle.’²

But we shall see more of this when we come to treat of its opposite, ‘kindness.’

Greediness and avarice are often vigorously condemned ; they are especially temptations of the householder.

‘The greedy in their selfishness do not leave sorrow, lamentation, and avarice : therefore the wise recluses leave greediness to wander in sight of the

¹ Dh. 222. 3 ; *Sacred Books of the East*, x. 58.

² *Ibid.* 406. 407.

security (of Nirvána).'¹ The connection is the same in other places,² when the good householder is described as 'free in giving away, with hands accustomed to make offerings, fond of giving, fond of the distribution of gifts;' avarice is regarded as a 'dirty' vice.

Sloth, which is not exactly the same as want of religious effort, is not tolerated (in the books). It is said to be produced and increased by dissatisfied, drowsy, yawning stupidity, caused by eating and by attachment of mind;³ and is overcome by energy, activity, and effort.⁴ It is associated with sensual pleasure, malice, pride, and doubt.⁵

To my mind the morality of these books appears to great advantage in its treatment of the vice of *pride*. The prominent place which it occupies in the list has been already shown :⁶ 'Let him not be proud, for that is not called bliss by the good. Let him not, therefore, think himself better (than others, or) low, or equal to others; questioned by different people, let him not adorn himself.'⁷

'The person who, without being asked, praises his own virtue and (holy) works to others, him the good call ignoble, one who praises himself.'⁸

¹ S. N. iv. 6. See *Sacred Books of the East*, xii. p. 155.

² Angut. iii. 42.

³ Angut. i. 2. 3.

⁴ Angut. i. 2. 8.

⁵ Angut. iii. 57. 1; and *ibid.* 119.

⁶ See Tevijja S.; *Sacred Books of the East*, xi. 182; and Sámāñ. S. 68. 2, etc. etc.

⁷ *i.e.* boast of his family, etc., S. N. iv. 14; *Sacred Books of the East*, x. p. 175.

⁸ *Sacred Books of the East*, iv. 3, p. 149.

'The wise man is indifferent to both praise and blame.¹ When saluted, he is not elated.² He knows, but is not proud of his knowledge.³ He is readier to take note of his own faults than of those of others.'⁴ As it is very beautifully said: 'One should be ready to tell one's faults, for the sense of shame swiftly fades. The conscience of a monk should be as tender, his sense of shame as keen, as that of a virgin bride.'⁵

False pretension to supernatural attainments is among the unpardonable sins (p. 192), and all false professions and pretensions are condemned.⁶

Especially, the monks are warned against being elated by honours, entertainments, reputation, and the like. The writers are never tired of repeating a proverb to this effect: The fruit of the plantain (banana) is its bane, so is honour the bane of the monk. This was especially illustrated by the fall of Devadatta.⁷

This danger from the gain, entertainment, and reputation, which virtue itself secures, is associated with pride and lying. It is dreadful; a bait by which men are caught; men are entangled by it as a long-wooled goat is by thorns; many go to hell through

¹ Brahmaj. S., *ab init.*; D. N. l. 1. 3, etc.

S. N. ii. 13.

² Angut. iv. 185.

³ Dh. 50a

⁴ Angut. iv. 74. paraphrased. I have given the sense of the passage, but have expressed it more delicately.

⁵ Tevijja S., Cetok. S., etc.; *Sacred Books of the East*, xi. pp. 195, 227.

⁷ Angut. iv. 68, etc. etc.

it. It eats into the skin, and into the flesh, etc. ;¹ it is like a hair rope on the leg.²

¹ The expression used about the love of a father for a son, in the account of the admission of Rahula, *supra*, p. 59.

² Sanyut. xvii. xviii., where there are over forty Sutrās upon it.

CHAPTER XI

THE VIRTUES

IT is a curious thing, considering how fond the Buddhist books are of lists of vices and of mental attainments, that they have no corresponding lists of virtues. There are the four ill-conditions, the ten bonds, the three corruptions, and a multitude more lists of faults. There are the four meditations, the four supernatural attainments, the ten forms of intellectual strength, and so on. But I know of no numerical list of virtues.¹ So much the better. We can follow an arrangement of our own without doing any violence to the Buddhist method.

First, let us take, what is the glory of Buddhism, the doctrine of *loving-kindness*, or *mettā* (maitreya). The word meant originally friendship, and it is mainly by Buddhism, I believe, that its meaning has been enlarged. The next Buddha, as later Buddhist belief

¹ The ten Perfections (páramitá) are no exception to this, as they concern only Buddhas; but they form the nearest approach to a list of virtues, and are by no means a scientific arrangement: the place occupied by knowledge (paññá) is alone enough to show this. These ten Perfections are those of giving, conduct (or obedience to the precepts), leaving the world, knowledge, energy, patience, truth, firmness, loving-kindness, resignation. 'The attainment of Buddhahood with all its superhuman attributes (*e.g.* omniscience) is the result or consequence of the vast accumulation of merit during the exercise of the páramitás in anterior births.'—Childers, *Dict.* s.v.

holds, is to be named *Maitrī*; or 'the loving one.' Whether this expectation is regarded as moulded by the worship of *Mitra* or *Mithras*, or as an unconscious prophecy of the coming of Him who is Love, it is at any rate a proof of the place which this virtue once occupied in Buddhist thought.

I propose to discuss it under four heads: In its widest sense, as loving-kindness and sympathy, and in three special senses, as the spirit of unity, as meekness, as unwillingness to hurt.

§ 1. Gotama the Buddha is described as having devoted himself to preaching his doctrine out of kindness to gods and men, out of compassion. He is often represented as looking abroad with supernatural power of sight on the worlds of gods and men, and sending out his compassion towards all. But with the exception of this general governing principle of his life, he is not often presented to us as an example of this virtue in any particular action. No particular act of kindness, or at any rate none that cost him anything, is narrated of him as a historical person.

In manner, he is represented as extremely courteous and winning; in his method of teaching, considerate and patient. To opponents he was generous. Several times, when a rich convert proposed at once to transfer to Gotama and his monks the liberality which he had been bestowing on members of rival religious orders, Gotama is said to have dissuaded him.¹ When insulted, as the later books make him often to have

¹ *Maj. Nik.* lvi. etc.

been, by rival teachers, he was a pattern of patience. For the jealous Fire-worshipper, who feared Gotama's higher reputation would outshine his own on his own festival, Gotama showed consideration by withdrawing from the scene.¹ Even towards his bitter and murderous enemy, Devadatta, he maintained an attitude of perfect patience and dignity. For the feelings of Cunda, who gave him the pork which brought on his final illness, he showed a touching tenderness. Towards his affectionate but rather slow-witted friend, Ananda, Gotama is at once severe and considerate.

But with the general exception above noted, there is not ascribed to the historical Gotama any striking or peculiar illustration of loving-kindness. On his supposed conduct in previous 'births,' the legends have lavished every extravagance in attributing heroic actions to hares and stags and elephants. But they have left the Gotama of this age in the simplicity of the facts. What is the explanation?

I believe that as regards the older records the reason is that they tell the truth. As regards the later narratives, Professor Oldenberg's explanation may be correct. The Buddha had attained that to which moral achievements are only a means. He had 'done all that had to be done.' After he had become a Buddha, any action but that of teaching would have been out of place. So the exercise on a vast scale of all the virtues was relegated to the region of former births, in former ages, and under former Buddhas,

¹ Maha Vagga, i. 19.

when he who was to be the Buddha of this age was a Bodhisat, or being destined to be a Buddha.

But there is a further reason. The loving-kindness of Buddhism is rather a temper than a motive of action. It may have existed to the full in the Buddha without exhibiting itself in act. As a temper, it is the characteristic aim of his teaching.

He is represented as teaching that a little love is better than vast gifts.¹ It leads to high condition in future births.² In the Kassapa Sihanāda Sutta, Gotama discusses the common saying, 'It is hard to be a Brahman or a Samana.' In contrast with the labours and austerities to which this saying refers, Gotama says, 'The mendicant who cultivates loving-kindness in his heart, without enmity and without malice, and by destruction of the corruptions attains even in this life by his own insight the realisation of the corruptionless emancipation of the mind, the emancipation of knowledge, he, Kassapa, is rightly called a Brahman and a Samana.'³

'He lets his mind pervade one quarter of the world with thoughts of love, and so the second, and so the third, and so the fourth. And thus the whole wide world, above, below, around, and everywhere, does he continue to pervade with heart of love, far-reaching, grown great and beyond measure.

'Just Vasettha, as a mighty trumpeter makes himself heard, and that without difficulty, in all the four

¹ Sanyut. xx. 4.

² Angut. iv. 190.

³ Dig. Nik. viii. 16.

directions ; even so of all things that have shape or life, there is not one that he passes by or leaves aside, but regards them all with mind set free and deep-felt love.'¹

• 'As a mother at the risk of her life watches over her own child, her only child, so also let every one cultivate a boundless (friendly) mind towards all beings; and let him cultivate goodwill towards all the world, . . . standing, walking, or sitting, or lying, as long as he be awake, let him devote himself to this mind; this (way of) living, they say, is the best in the world.'²

§ 2. The spirit of *unity* and concord is a matter to which a very important place is given. In the biography of Gotama we have seen (p. 68) how he is said to have taken occasion, at the end of his career, from the case of the Vajjians, to urge unity upon his followers. But out of many passages that might be cited, the most charming is one which recurs several times, but which I may abridge from the translation of the tenth book of the *Maha Vagga*.³ Anuradha, Nanduja, and Kimbila were three monks who lived together in the Eastern Bamboo Park. The Buddha visited them, and after asking, as was his custom, after their circumstances, he said: 'And do you live in unity and concord, without quarrels, like milk and water (mixed together), and looking at each other with friendly eyes?' 'Certainly, Lord, we do so,'

¹ *Tevijja Sutta*, iii, 1, translated by Rhys Davids in *Sacred Books of the East* vol. xi. p. 201.

² *Sutta Nipata*, i. 8 ; *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. x. ii. p. 25.

³ *Maha Vagga*, x. 4 ; also in *Maj. Nik.* xxxi. etc. ; *Sacred Books of the East* vol. xvii. p. 309, etc.

etc. 'And in what way do you live thus' etc. ? Then each in turn replied for himself, and all used the same words : 'I think, Lord, it is all gain to me, indeed it is high bliss for me indeed to live in the company of brethren like these. Thus, Lord, do I exercise towards these venerable brethren friendliness¹ in my actions both openly and in secret. I exercise (towards them) friendliness in my words, and friendliness in my thoughts, both openly and in secret. And I think thus, Lord, "What if I were to give up my own will and to live only according to the will of these venerable brethren?" Thus, Lord, I give up my own will and live only according to the will of these venerable brethren. *Our bodies, Lord, are different, but our minds, I think, have become one.*'

In treating of the use of speech we shall see with what fulness and earnestness the duty of saying what will promote unity is insisted on.²

§ 3. The temper of *meekness* is closely akin to these, and may be called perhaps the favourite theme of Buddhist writers, whether in discourse or in 'birth story or fairy tale. Its motto is the couplet :³ 'Hatred is not appeased by hatred at any time ; but it is appeased by unhatred : this law is eternal.' And the verse that precedes this is excellent : 'He abused me, he beat me, he defeated me, he took what was mine ;' 'In those who do not cherish that, hatred is appeased.'

¹ *Mettā*. The same word which I have rendered, in its widest use, by 'loving-kindness.'

² See the Sutta translated on p. 332.

³ Dh. i. 1. 5.

Instead of quoting any more of such sentiments, I must give in illustration of them a sketch of the story of Dighávu. It was told to some monks among whom quarrels had arisen.

The great king Brahmadatta of Benares set out to war against Dighíti, the poor king of the comparatively insignificant realm of Kosala. Dighiti offered no resistance, but fled in disguise with his queen to the neighbourhood of Benares, and Brahmadatta took possession of his realm and all he had. When it came to Brahmadatta's knowledge that the fugitive king and his wife were living in disguise close to his city, he sent for them and had them both put to death with the utmost cruelty. Their only child, Dighavu, whom for safety's sake they had caused to live apart from them, happened to be coming to pay his parents a visit, when he met them thus being led out to execution. As soon as his father, Dighiti, late king of Kosala, saw his boy, he said to him these enigmatic words: 'Do not look long, my dear Dighavu, and do not look short; for not by hatred, my dear Dighavu, is hatred appeased, by not-hatred, my dear Dighavu, hatred is appeased.'¹

Having done what he could for the funeral of his parents, Dighavu went into the forest. There he cried and wept to his heart's content. Then he wiped

¹ *Maha Vagga*, x. 2, *S.B.E.* xii. 298, etc. This story is interesting in many ways. It is a tale of old mythical times, but is not a 'birth story,' i.e. the hero is not identified with a previous life of the Buddha. Further, in its close resemblance in several points to the history of David in his relations with Saul, it is one among many indications that the Old Testament narratives, as well as the Greek myths, had reached the India of Buddhism.

his tears, entered the town of Benares, and persuaded the kings' elephant trainer to accept him as an apprentice. 'And young Dighavu," said Gotama to the monks, 'arose in the night at dawn's time and sung in the elephant stables in a beautiful voice and played upon the lute. And King Brahmadatta heard his singing and playing on the lute, and asked who it was who sang and played so well. They told him it was the elephant trainer's boy, and brought him to the king. He played and sang before the king, and charmed him, and became his favourite attendant; and, ere long, O monks, King Brahmadatta of Kási gave to young Dighavu a position of trust.'

One day when the king went hunting Dighavu was acting as charioteer. He contrived to get separated from the rest of the chariots, and after a long drive the king grew tired, and lay down to rest with his head in Dighavu's lap. Then thought the lad, now is the time to satisfy my hatred against the murderer of my parents and the despoiler of our realm; and he drew his sword. But the dying words of his father came into his mind, and he put up his sword. A second time and a third time he drew it, and again returned it to its sheath.

'At that moment the king awoke, having had, as he said, a frightful dream; the son of Dighiti, he dreamt, had come upon him with his sword. 'I, O king,' said the lad, 'am Dighavu, Dighiti's son. You have murdered my parents and robbed us of our realm, now is the time for me to satisfy my hatred.' 'Grant me my

life, dear Dighavu,' cried the great king, falling at his feet. The young man spared him, returned to his post of charioteer, and drove the king home.

• And Brahmadatta asked Dighavu the meaning of those words of his father, King Dighiti, 'Do not look long, and do not look short,' and the rest. "Not long," he replied, 'means, let not your hatred last long, and "Not short" means, do not be hasty to fall out with your friends.' The other words his conduct had already illustrated. And Brahmadatta restored to Dighavu his father's realm and goods, and gave him his own daughter to be his wife.

§ 4. *Consideration for animals* must have mention here, for the books in very many places teach it, not merely in connection with the rule against taking life, but as a form of kindness. Would that it were a rule for the practical conduct of Buddhists now! Unhappily, it is matter of universal observation in Ceylon, that the very rule against destroying life appears to be taken as the sanction for any extent of cruelty which does not involve killing. But it was not so, in theory at least, with the writers of the Pitakas, nor with the compilers of those Jatakas of which the people are still so fond. In those 'birth stories,' a genuine sympathy for animal life, with that racy rustic humour which accompanies it, is often made the means of giving point to the moral, that the dumb animals claim of us, not merely the cold technical avoidance of killing, but friendliness that will neither hurt them nor cause them fear.¹

¹ Ahinsá and Abhayam.

It is carried to a fantastic excess in the tenderness for vegetable life, which is required at least of monks, under the larger rules of conduct.¹ This belongs, I fancy, to the later and 'Rabbinical,' so to compare it, stages of the system. In one of the oldest books, we find Gotama inclined to treat as a vulgar error, or at least as a thing unproved, the notion of vegetable 'life.'²

We shall have occasion to touch on this matter again; here I will only notice, though it may be scarcely relevant, a curious passage about love or kindness to the whole race of snakes, which occurs in more than one place. In it the sacred word 'mettam' is bestowed abundantly on every sort and tribe of serpent, with the addition of a wish that none of them should hurt the speaker. It is, in fact, a charm, or 'pirit,' against snakes, which has been boldly dragged into the company of Buddhist moral maxims.³

'At one time the Buddha was dwelling at Savatthi in the Jetavana, Anathapindika's park, and at that time a certain monk had been bitten by a serpent in Savatthi and had died. A number of monks came where the Buddha was and saluted him, and took their seats respectfully beside him; and, as they sat respectfully beside him, those monks said to the Buddha—

'Here, Lord, in Savatthi, a monk has been bitten by a serpent and has died.'

¹ For instance in the Sutta translated on p. 332.

² Maha Vagga, v. 6. 1.

³ Angut. iv. 11.

‘That monk, probably, O monks, had not radiated forth loving-kindness on the four royal families of snakes. If that monk, O monks, had radiated forth loving-kindness on the four royal families of snakes, that monk, O monks, would not have been bitten by a snake and died.’ ‘And what are the four royal families of snakes?’

‘The Virupakha royal snake family, the Erápatha, the Chabyáputta, and the Kanhágotamaka royal snake family. Now, probably, monks, that monk had not etc. . . . if he had, etc., he would not, etc. I command you, monks, to radiate loving-kindness on the four royal families of snakes for the protection of yourselves, for the guarding of yourselves, for a charm to keep yourselves safe.’

Then follow the verses :—

‘My love is on the Virúpakhas, on the Erápathas is my love,
My love is on the Chabyaputtas, and on the Kanhágotamakas ;
My love is on the footless ones, on the two-footed ones is my love ;
My love is on the four-footed, on the many-footed is my love.
May no footless one hurt me, may there hurt me no two-footed,
May no four-footed one hurt me, may there hurt me no many-footed one !

May all beings, all that live and all that are, universally
See all happiness, and may no sort of harm befall !’

And then in prose :—

‘Infinite is the Buddha, infinite is the Doctrine, infinite is the Community ; finite are the creeping things, the snakes and scorpions, the centipedes, the woolly-bellies (spiders) and lizards, and the mice. My protection is made, my charm is made ! let the creatures depart. Glory to the Buddha, glory to the seven perfect Buddhas, say I !’

Such is the sixty-seventh Sutta of the fourth division of the Anguttara Nikáya. But nowadays the number of the creeping things, in Ceylon at least, is no longer finite.

Would that the Buddhists of the present day would more frequently charm their animals with love ! The bare rule against killing commands little of our admiration ; but the kind-heartedness which finds in the dumb creatures something to love and sympathise with—fellow-feeling for all that can feel—this has a wonderful attraction. There is in it something that wins the love of men, so that those who are kind to animals are called humane.

The sentiment of sympathy for animal life is found not only in the Pitakas and Jatakas. It pervades, as we shall see, the inscriptions of Asoka, who seems, if we may judge from the chronological order of his edicts, to have grasped this first among Buddhist principles. He not only professed and enjoined regard for animal life, but instituted hospitals, as he says, throughout India for brutes as well as for men, and planted the herbs which would be useful for their treatment. His kindly action found imitation among the Buddhist kings of Ceylon, notably in Buddhadása, whose provision for the medical treatment of animals, and his extraordinary skill and benevolence in personally attending them, form an amusing episode in the Mahavansa (chap. xxxvii.).

Here it may be noted that the credit of having first founded hospitals belongs undoubtedly to Bud-

dhism. Nor can any reader, who has before him the passages which we have been considering in this chapter, claim for either Old or New Testament the exclusive communication to man of the theory of disinterested kindness and the law of love. The same Holy Spirit who wrote our Scriptures gave to some of the Buddhist teachers no despicable measure of insight into these truths.

But it was not till that Holy Spirit animated the Christian Church, that a community was formed in which these truths became a powerful—I might almost say an appreciable—factor in human life.

Much emphasis is laid in the Buddhist teaching on *filial piety* and reverence for old age. These were genuine Brahman virtues, as is acknowledged in the following passage :—

‘Those families have a place, with Brahma in which the sons offer religious honours to their parents in the sacred chamber; these families have a place with the teachers of old, with those to whom sacrifice is due.

‘For “Brahmas” is a title of fathers and mothers, “teachers of old” is a title of fathers and mothers, “worthy of sacrifice” is a title of fathers and mothers.

‘Why? Because fathers and mothers are great benefactors to their sons, their introducers, feeders, and guides in this world.

‘. . . Therefore, let the good man honour and succour them with food and drink, with clothing and lodging, with rubbing, with bathing, with washing of

the feet ; for waiting thus on father and mother, good men praise him here, and after death he rejoices in heaven.¹

‘The gift of the whole world with all its wealth would be no adequate return to parents for all that they have done.’²

This teaching is touchingly illustrated in the following story :—

A certain monk had a quantity of robes in his possession. They ought, of course, to have been placed at the disposal of the Community ; but he proposed to give them to his father and mother. The other monks told this to the Buddha, and he replied, ‘Since they are his father and mother, what can we say, O Bhikkhus, though he give them to them. I allow you, O Bhikkhus, to give (robes in such a case) to your parents.’³ Among those who lose in life is the rich man who fails to support his aged parents.⁴ He is reckoned as an outcast.⁵ There are said to be four ways in which a man goes altogether wrong, and is foolish and unwise and bad, and destroys and ruins himself, and is guilty and regarded as guilty by the wise, and produces great demerit—misconduct towards mother, misconduct towards father, misconduct towards a Buddha, misconduct towards the disciples of Buddha. He is blamed by the wise here, and after death he goes to hell.⁶

¹ Angut. iii. 31.

² *Ib.* ii. 4, etc.

³ *Maha Vagga*, viii. 22 ; *Sacred Books*.

⁴ S. N. i. 6.

⁵ *Ib.* i. 7.

⁶ Angut. iv. 4. Cf. *ib.* ii. 12. 7. See Sigalovāda Sutta, translated in Rhys Davids' *Buddhism*, p. 144.

Akin to filial piety is *reverence for age*. This duty is frequently impressed upon members of the Community, and constantly provided for in the Vinaya rules. The hatred of 'old age,'¹ as a form of misery always coupled with death, did not prevent the early Buddhists from being faithful to the Brahman tradition of respect for the old, any more than the theory that birth is also misery was held to justify ingratitude to parents. 'He who always greets and constantly reveres the aged, four things will increase to him, viz., life, beauty, happiness, power.'²

'Do they reverence the old?' was one of the questions asked by Gotama about the Vajjians; if they did, they might be expected to prosper.³

We now come to what corresponds in the Buddhist system to what we understand by liberality, generosity, and self-sacrifice. I am afraid it cannot be said that either of those terms has an equivalent in Pali. The second certainly has none; and the idea is foreign, as far as I can judge, to Buddhist thought. Liberality and self-sacrifice are the nobler and rarer aspects of what, in their commoner aspects, must be rendered 'giving' and 'giving up' (*dānam* and *cāgo*). I will discuss these terms as impartially as possible; and with ample illustration, though I confine myself entirely to the Pitakas.

Giving is seldom spoken of simply, apart from

¹ The word 'jará,' the decay of strength, etc., though generally rendered 'old age,' is quite distinct from the words for old age in its honourable sense.

² Dh. 109, *Sacred Books of the East*, xxx. i. 33.

³ Parinibb. S.

mention of the recipient.¹ As a rule, when used simply, the term means 'giving to monks.' Indeed, I have not noticed any exception to this rule. Nor is there much, if anything, about giving to the poor as such. We do indeed read occasionally of great distributions by kings and rich men, but they are almost always to religious mendicants. It is possible that the idea of a class of needy poor was not familiar to the India of the writer's time. But in the immense majority of instances, the idea of 'giving' is qualified by the character of the recipient. To give to the 'wise' is so much better and more profitable, that all other idea of 'giving' is utterly overshadowed by this. It is no doubt a deep-seated Indian notion that a gift is from the inferior to the superior. The higher the recipient then the more precious and meritorious the gift. That to a Buddha is greatest, then (in later books) that to a self-Buddha, then that to a disciple, in the order of attainments. The smallest gift or service done to one of these exalted beings may lead to an immense reward.²

Vacchagotta asked the Buddha whether it was true that he taught that gifts ought to be given to himself alone and not to others. The Buddha repudiated such a charge, and said it was very wrong

¹ *Maha Vagga*, vi. 23.

² One thinks of 'the cup of cold water' and the 'prophet's reward' in the New Testament. But while I will not deny that the Buddhist idea contains part of the truth taught by our Lord, yet I must point out that the essence of the Christian's gift to Christ's disciple consists, not in the attainment of the disciple, but in the reference to Him, who is the true object of all service, the Creator and Owner and Giver of all. The Buddhist principle goes in the right direction, but stops short, and utterly misses the end which gives reason to it.

to prevent a gift being given to others. 'Is it likely that I,' he said, 'who teach consideration for the smallest worm, should have no consideration for men? But I do teach, Vacchagotta, that what is given to the good has great reward, and not what is given to the bad.'¹

Again: 'There are two kinds of persons to whom gifts should be given in this world, the learner in religion and the advanced saint:

'The learner and the saint in this world
Are worthy of offerings from those who bring gifts:
They are upright in deed, word, and thought;
That is the field for those who bring gifts,
Then what is given has great reward.'²

The fourth Sutta of the third book of Sutta Nipata³ is occupied with answering the question put by a Brahman: 'I delight in offering, O Gotama, I desire to make an offering, but I do not understand it; do thou instruct me, tell me in what case the offering succeeds.' The answer is prolonged through some twenty⁴ stanzas, but comes, in short, to this: 'The good,' that is, the Buddha and his followers, 'these deserve the offering. Them you should worship and honour with food and drink, so the gifts will prosper.' In the next Sutta the same instruction is given to a Buddhist householder, and he is told also in what temper of mind he is to be himself while he gives—calm, purged from hatred, and full of loving-kindness.⁴

¹ Angut. iii. 57, paraphrased.

³ *Sacred Books of the East*, x. ii. p. 76, etc.

² *Ib.* ii. 13. 1.

⁴ *Ib.* p. 80, etc.

It follows of course from this theory, as it was necessary for practical maintenance, that the Community is the great 'field' for 'giving'. Gifts are the seed, whose crop is 'merit,' and the best 'merit field' is the Sangha. And it is in this character that the Sangha is oftenest commended, less as a teaching body than as a receiving body, to the reverence and confidence of the householder. All other 'giving' is lost sight of in comparison with this, and the word comes almost exclusively to mean giving to individual monks or to the Community. It is the essential part of the layman's duty, the necessary correlative of the mendicant's rule. Its commonest form is the offering of food, the special function of women.

The Buddha was once visiting a faithful woman who provided him with every kind of food, offering it with her own hands. After the meal he said to her : 'A good religious woman who gives food, gives four things to the recipients.' 'What four?' 'She gives vital force, she gives beauty, she gives happiness, she gives strength. By giving vital force, she becomes partaker of vital force, human or divine ; by giving beauty, she becomes partaker of beauty ; by giving happiness, of happiness ; by giving strength, of strength, human or divine.' Then follow the verses :

'The woman who gives well-made food, clean, nice, and full of flavour,
That gift given to the upright, the virtuous, and exalted,
Accumulates merit upon merit ; and has great reward, is praised by
him who saw all the worlds.

Thinking then of such an offering, let those in the world who are wise
Purge out entirely the mud of stinginess : so they will be unblamed,
and go to heaven.

(Angut. iv. 57.)

Of Suttas to this effect there is a large collection. The group ends with one which insists on the blessedness of those householders who give to monks the 'four requisites' robes, food, lodging, and medicines.

'By day and by night, for ever their merit increases :

And heaven is the place he goes to, having wrought a favourable
"karma."

There is no hint that in this matter 'virtue is its own reward,' still less that such conduct pleases a Divine Ruler, or is like a Father in heaven. The inevitable mechanical result of giving to monks is merit and future prosperity. It is entirely for one's own good that one gives. The first offering made to Gotama himself, that of the two merchants, was made, it is expressly said, for their own good.¹ And it is chiefly as giving them the best opportunity for acquiring this merit that the Community is valued by the laity. The laity are injured when good monks leave a place and bad ones succeed them, because 'the opportunities of alms-giving are spoilt.'²

So far, we do Buddhism no injustice when we say that the idea of 'giving' falls very short of that which is represented by the word charity, even in its modern degraded use. The giver sows with a view to a crop, which is to be his own; and the course of his liberality is strictly determined by the calculation of the return in merit to be expected. There is in this a portion of the truth, for 'whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap;' but it is only a

¹ Maha Vagga, i. 4. 4.

² Culla Vagga, i. 13..4.

fraction of the truth which was taught by Him who said, 'Your Father shall reward you,' and 'that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven.' In the absence of any knowledge of a Father in heaven, to be imitated and to reward, it was hardly possible that the Christian ideal should be conceived.

There is a nobler aspect of 'giving' or *dānam*,¹ when it is used in composition with *dhamma* or doctrine. The phrase occurs in Asoka's inscriptions, and is one of the technical Buddhist terms that are found there. Commentators doubted, while the Pitaka books were imperfectly known, whether this compound, 'doctrine-gift,' ought to be understood of a 'gift according to the doctrine,' or of a 'gift consisting of the doctrine.' It is clear that the latter is the meaning. The phrase occurs in the following amongst other passages :—

'There are two kinds of gifts: the gift of food and the gift of doctrine; and of these two, the gift of doctrine is the better.'²

The substance of this principle is expressed, though the phrase 'dhammadānam' is not used, in the following :—

• 'Three persons are great benefactors of another person.

'What three?'

¹ I avoid as far as possible inflicting Pali words upon the reader; but of this one word *dānam* I wish him to take note, with a view to what follows. The word means either 'the act of giving' or 'a gift.'

² Angut. ii. 13. 1, a little abridged.

‘The person through whom another has gone for refuge to the Buddha, the Law, and the Community.

‘The person through whom another obtains knowledge of the Four Truths.

‘The person through whom another attains final insight and emancipation.

‘There is no benefactor greater than these; and it is no easy thing for that man to requite these benefactors, not by all the respect and homage or all the gifts and service he can offer.’

In another passage, this spiritual benefit is beautifully indicated as the best return a son can make to his parents.¹

This is the only ‘gift’ that the monk can give. Silver and gold he has not (or ought not to have); his *dānam* is *dharmadānam*. And one who has fulfilled this part is called a liberal monk, and his merit is greater than that of the monk who has only known and attained. For he is to the latter what the Sambuddha is to the *pacceka buddha*. In the *Sumana Sutta*² a princess asks Gotama what difference there is, supposing each to be re-born in the god-world, between the condition of a monk who has been a ‘giver’ (*dāyako*) and that of one who has kept his attainments to himself (*adāyako*). The answer is, the former enjoys greater long-life, strength, and wisdom. ‘And what if each be re-born as a man and become a monk?’ ‘He will obtain the four requisites (see above, p. 177) with ease or in abundance.’

¹ Angut. ii. 4. 2.

² In the latter part of the Angut. Nik.

'And what if both be "rahats"?' 'There is then no difference : Nirvana-bliss is but one' and unqualified.

Such are the main features of the treatment of 'giving.' It is from a rather different point of view that the idea of 'giving up' (*cágo*) is developed. In this, the ruling thought is not the recipient, but the act of surrender. It is a nearer approach to an entirely unselfish act. In Angut. iii. 70. 8, the disciple is taught to think to what bliss those who are now deities in the various heavens have attained by their faith, their conduct, their *giving up*, and their knowledge, and to say, if I imitate them in these, I shall be born there too.

But in this passage, perhaps, as certainly in many others, it is the 'giving up' of vices that is referred to.

It is often identified with *dánam*, as in the titles of the most famous illustrations of it by (pretended) acts, in former lives, of him who was to be Buddha. The Cariya Pitaka relates how the Bodhisat (ch. ix.) fulfilled the 'perfection of giving' (*dánapáramita*) by giving his wife and children, when he was King Vessantara, to Sakra, disguised as a Brahman; by giving up his two eyes to a blind Brahman in the Sivi birth; and, most famous of all, by leaping, when he was a hare, into the fire to be roasted for the dinner of another. This story—doubtless the adaptation of some older folk-lore, founded on the fancied likeness of the shadows in the moon to a hare—has made the sign of the hare in the moon the commonest emblem of the Buddha.

In each of these tales the compiler (one of the latest compilers, I think, within the canon) represents the act as the issue, not of any sense of pity, or enthusiasm or self-sacrifice, but of the coldest calculations of results. 'If I do not make this surrender I shall not attain Buddhahood.'

There is a nobility still about this, but it is the nobility of a strong desire to attain Buddhahood and readiness to pay a high price for knowledge, not at all the nobleness of unselfish self-sacrifice. The original idea is in this instance degraded by the insensibility of the versifier. It must have been on the lips of very different preachers that these parts of Buddhist teaching—*Mettam*, *dánam*, *cágo*—won the hearts of men. But no mere teaching on such topics is worth much—whether it be in Buddhist books or in Christian—unless it is embodied in real human deeds.

CHAPTER XII

THE PRECEPTS

IN the popular conception of Buddhism by Buddhists now, the most prominent place is occupied, not by the Four noble Truths, or the Twelve Nidanas, or the Eight-fold Way, but by the five precepts of conduct : the five rules ; in Sinhalese 'pansil.' These are the prohibitions of (1) destroying life, (2) taking what is not given, (3) lying, (4) drinking intoxicating liquors, (5) sexual offences. But it is an interesting fact that these do not hold such a place in the original system. They are not found, as five, in the most ancient manual of discipline. They are not among the discoveries made on the night of Buddhahood, nor are they mentioned in the first sermons. They do not occur in those earliest chapters of the *Maha Vagga*, which we regard as containing in a nut-shell the authentic kernel of Buddhism. They never occur in any discourse which bears marks of being more than conventionally an utterance of the Buddha himself.

In the *Vinaya Pitaka* they are found among other rules for the monks—among the ten,—but never stand

by themselves, with one exception. In the fable of the elephant, the monkey, and the partridge, which is introduced into the later part of the Vinaya, it is said that the partridge and his friends lived happily keeping the five precepts.¹

Nor is the number five constantly adhered to, for in many cases, perhaps in a majority, the fourth prohibition is omitted.

All five are found in a statement of the duties of laymen,² and in reference to the conduct of man and wife.³ They are quoted roughly in a passage which teaches that what really defiles a man is not ceremonial impurity but sin,⁴ and in the same book elaborately, but with other rules.⁵ In the more exhaustive Suttas, such as the Tevijja Sutta,⁶ they are stated under the heading (of more modern date) 'Little Rules of Conduct;' but even in these the fourth rule is sometimes omitted.⁷

From the position which they hold in the books—one of a definiteness gradually increasing from the earliest passages to the later—and also from their nature, we may confidently infer that the five precepts did not, as such, form part of Gotamā's original proclamation. We may reasonably doubt whether they had assumed, even by Asoka's time, anything like the prominence which they have since acquired;

¹ Culla Vagga, vi. 6. 3.

² Angut. iv. 53.

³ *Ib.*

⁴ Sutta N. ii. 2.

⁵ Sutta N. ii. 14. See Dh. 18; Angut. iv. 99.

⁶ *Sacred Books of the East*, xi. p. 190. Cf. Maj. Nik. 41, *et passim*.

⁷ *E.g.* in Brahmaj. Sutta.

for it is hard to believe that in that case they would have found no place in his edicts.

Their history is probably this. They were originally formulated, with the other five of the group called the ten precepts, for the guidance of the monks. As lay disciples increased around the Community, these were selected from among the rules to be enforced upon the laity. The laity were not, it must be remembered, originally under rule at all. They were—in the language of modern religious communities—('associated') with them to a certain degree only. Sometimes, or for a limited time, the associated laity might take on themselves eight of the rules, or even the ten; but only the five were ordinarily laid upon them. These five are specified, from among the ten, as those for the breach of which a novice was to be expelled.¹ And even of the five one at least—being no doubt originally intended rather as a ceremonial than as a moral rule—occupied an uncertain position.

However this may be, the Precepts represent quite a different treatment of the theory of morals from that represented by the Truths and the Eight-fold Way, or by the course of four stages in which the disciple gets rid successively of the ten attachments. This is on a lower level altogether; has a humbler aim. It is a popular system adapted not to the early enthusiasm, but to later days.

§ 1. The first precept, against destroying life, has both a ceremonial and a moral side. I have already

¹ *Maha Vagga*, i. 60 compared with i. 56.

spoken of its moral side ; that in which it would be chiefly urged upon the laity. In its ceremonial aspect it is often exaggerated. The use of a filter, lest small creatures should be destroyed in drinking ; the injunction to be careful in throwing away a liquid, that it should be thrown either into water which had no worms in it or on to ground where there was no grass ; the condemnation (in a late book) of the killing of a dangerous snake ;¹ these are exceptions to the common sense which guided most of the early Buddhist regulations. But this exaggeration does not seem ever to have been carried to such lengths as by the Jains.

The monk eats meat ; Gotama himself habitually did so, and died, as we know, from the consequence of a meal of pork. And the offering of that flesh is commended as one of the two most meritorious offerings ever made. The monk may not encourage an animal's being killed on purpose for him ; but seeing that he is invited to a meal on the morrow, and on his accepting the invitation the host goes away to prepare the feast—nothing occurs oftener than this, and it was the case with Cunda's pork—there is no real scrupulousness about the killing of animals for food.

There are indications of a Brahmanical aspect of this precept, in which it is applied particularly to killing cows and oxen,² and of an anti-Brahman aspect of it in which it is a direct attack on Brahman

¹ Udán, 13.

² A horrible torture is assigned to the murderer of an ox, Sanyut. xix. 2.

sacrifice. This is a very common moral in the 'birth-stories,' but it occurs also in the Pitaka books.¹ Among the evils involved in Brahma sacrifices, besides the slaughter of animals, the destruction of grass and wood for fuel is condemned.

But the most interesting fact connected with the ancient insistence on this rule is the virtual promulgation of it by Asoka in his earlier edicts. In the earliest group he says that he not only has withdrawn his patronage from sacrifices, but has reduced to a minimum the supplies for the royal table. At a later date he had given up eating meat altogether.

But the fact that Asoka, while so strongly insisting on the avoidance of taking life, does not use the special term under which it is forbidden in the precept, is a strong argument that the five precepts did not hold, in his day, any such position as they do in later Buddhism.

The public announcement of this maxim by royal authority, as a counsel if not as a law, for a vast continent, is surely one of the most curious events in the history of the human conscience. It cannot be too clearly or too confidently stated, that the Buddhist conscience was misinformed. Taking the life of animals for suitable purposes is not wrong. The judgment of the best men in the wisest races of mankind accords with the teaching of Revelation upon

¹ Sutta N. ii. 7; Sanyut. xv. 13; Angut. iv. 39; Kútadanta S. (D.N. vi.). This Sutta is apparently an enlarged anti-Brahman Játaka. The use in it of Samárabhatáro is to be compared with the use of Árambhati in the edicts.

this point. The conscience of Gotama, Asoka, and the Buddhist world was at fault; and this erroneous piece of moral law has been promulgated with such a publicity and earnestness, and imperial authority, as probably has never been placed at the service of any other single moral rule. The very characters in which it was recommended are marked at this day upon the face of India.

§ 2. The prohibition of stealing, or taking what has not been given, is not much enlarged upon. In the later books, as might be expected, it is exaggerated; as where one is condemned for smelling a flower, as having taken a scent which did not belong to him. Of the elaborate enumeration of all imaginable instances of this and other offences, which is found in the Vinaya Pitaka, I propose to treat later.

§ 3. Prohibition of false speaking. This is often qualified by the words, 'conscious and deliberate.' Deliberate lying is frequently and strongly condemned. And many illustrations are given of the evil of it. The rules against sins of speech occupy as large a space as all the other four rules together. He who lies is guilty of all sin.¹ It is mentioned as chief among the evils to which men are led by gain, honour, and fame.² The liar goes to hell.³ A hint is given of the late date at which part even of the Vinaya was compiled, when, it is said, of some of the monks of Gotama's day, 'Now, at that time men were speakers of truth,

¹ Maj. Nik. 61.
Sanyut. xvii. 11.

³ Dh. 22, etc. etc.

and keepers of their word which they had pledged.’¹ But the most remarkable thing about this rule is the way in which it is expanded. Under this head every kind of unkind speaking, whether as abuse or violent language before a man’s face, or as slander behind his back, is condemned. The passages are many, and some of them are excellent.² Not only is what is bad to be avoided, but such language as will give pleasure and promote unity is to be cultivated.

The pupil of a monk is to warn his tutor if he sees him on the verge of offending with his tongue.³ A man should speak well of his neighbour even if unasked.⁴ Some slanders, however, are worse than others. Speaking against a Buddha is a terrible sin, and we read of the awful consequence of a slander against the two chief disciples, Sāriputta and Moggallāna.⁵

Further, under the same head, chattering and talking nonsense are forbidden. Probably this has in view the dignity of members of the Community, and their keeping distinct, which is much insisted on, from those outside. Too much fondness for talking to householders is often condemned. This tends to confirm what I have suggested, that these were originally rules of conduct for the Community.

However that may be, the fact remains, and it is one to be reckoned to the credit of Buddhism, that

¹ Culla Vagga, vii. 1. 3; *Sacred Books of the East*, xx. p. 226.

² *Tevijja S.*, and *Digh. Nik. pass.*

³ *Maha Vagga*, i. 25. 10.

⁴ *Angut.* iv. 73. See *ibid.* 100.

⁵ *S. N.* ii. 10. See *ibid.* xxx. pp. 73, 119; and iv. 14, p. 177.

the moral teaching as to the use of speech is practical, full, and high-toned.

§ 4. The fourth precept, which forbids impurity, is generally briefly stated, and so left. I should prefer so to leave it now; but if at all a true estimate of the Buddhist teaching is to be formed, two points in regard to this subject must be noted. First, offences against this rule, though classed among the gravest possible offences, are usually treated as breaches of a ceremonial rule, not as sins; and accordingly that which in itself is really no sin at all,—for instance, the return of a monk to his own wife,—ranks with the grossest sins. Secondly, the rule is qualified, where it occurs in that code which most scholars consider the very oldest part of the Buddhist literature, by the addition of words, which it is impossible to quote, but which show a depravity of the moral standard, a misconception of the moral proportion of things, which is perfectly appalling.

§ 5. In comparison with the real importance of the second, third, and fourth, and the immense fictitious importance of the first rule of conduct, the emphasis laid on the fifth, which forbids strong drink, is trifling.¹ As I have already mentioned, it is frequently absent from the list, even in the most exhaustive and systematic Suttas. It is conspicuously absent from a list of the things which certainly bring a man to hell.² It is condemned in a monk, whose bright light it

¹ Tevijja S., Brahmaj. S., Samañ. S.; but see Kutadant S. 25.

² Angut. iv. 64; and see *ibid.* 261 *seq.*

obscures,¹ and to refrain from it is excellent for any one.²

‘Let the householder who approves of (adopts) this dharma not give himself to intoxicating drinks; let him not cause others to drink, nor approve of those that drink, knowing it is madness.

‘For through intoxication the stupid commit sins, and make other people intoxicated: let him avoid this seat of sin, this madness, this folly, delightful to the stupid.’³

This is the strongest passage on this subject that I have noticed. I have met with no instance of any history of the evil consequences of it: no births in hell of drunkards, etc.

When it is mentioned (in its place in the list) it is usually associated in terms of equal importance with warnings against frequenting theatres and dancing and music halls, as one of the forms of idleness, rather than as a degrading habit, or as leading to mischief. One can only wonder how a rule so little insisted on, and so little observed by the laity, except in fulfilment of special vows, can have maintained its place in the Fivefold Code.

¹ Culla Vagga, xii. 1. 3; S. N. iv. 5. 15. 16; Angut. iv. 50.

² S. N. ii. 4 (Mangala S.)

³ Dhammika 3. 22; trans. in *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. xii. 66.

CHAPTER XIII

SPECIAL MORAL RULES OF THE COMMUNITY :

THE PÁTÍMOKKHA

§ 1. **T**HE estimation in which these rules of conduct were originally held, and their relative importance, may be further judged of by the place which they occupy in the special laws of the Community. At the beginning of the Pátimokkha (or method for the monks to clear themselves of guilt by confession) are laid down four irremediable faults, or 'conditions of defeat,' considered to be fatal to the *status* of a regular disciple of the Buddha. These faults are breaches of peculiar forms of four of the five rules of conduct. The first is any act of sexual intercourse.¹ The second is thus worded: 'Whatsoever Bhikkhu shall take from village, etc., or from wood, anything not given—what men call "theft,"—in such manner of taking as kings would seize the thief for, and slay, or bind, or banish him, saying, "Thou art a thief, thou art stupid, thou art a fool, thou art dishonest;" the Bikkhu who in that manner takes the

¹ It is here that the words occur, 'antamaso,' etc., to which I have referred as revealing so shocking a depravation of the moral sense.

thing. not given, he, too, has fallen into defeat, he is no longer in communion.’¹

The third treats human life as more serious than others.

It runs, ‘Whatsoever Bhikkhu shall knowingly deprive of life a human being, or shall seek out an assassin against a human being, or shall utter the praises of death, or incite another to self-destruction, saying, “Ho! my friend! what good do you get from this sinful, wretched, life? death is better to thee than life!” If so thinking, and with such an aim, he by various argument utter the praises of death, or incite another to self-destruction, he too is fallen into defeat, he is no longer in communion.’²

The fourth offence does, I believe, correspond to lying (*musāvāda*), but is a special form of it which was regarded, I suppose, as specially destructive of spiritual progress to the individual, and injurious to the Community. ‘Whatsoever Bhikkhu, without being clearly conscious of extraordinary qualities, shall give out regarding himself that insight into the knowledge of the noble ones has been accomplished, saying, “Thus do I know, thus do I perceive,” and at some subsequent time, whether on being pressed, or without being pressed, he, feeling guilty, shall be desirous of being cleansed from his fault, and shall say, “Brethren, when I knew not, I said that I knew; when I saw not, I said that I saw, telling a fruitless falsehood; then, unless he so spake through undue

¹ *Sacred Books of the East*, xiii. 4.

² *Ib.* xiii. 4.

confidence, he too has fallen into defeat, he is no longer in communion.'¹

These four great crimes are repeated (Maha Vagga, v. 78) in the formula of warning addressed to monks at their first admission.

§ 2. These are the foundation of the remaining moral laws of the Community, which follow in the other sections of the Patimokkha. Next in order to the four great offences, follow the thirteen called (from the nature of the formalities required to atone for them) 'Sanghādisesa.' Of these the first five are connected with uncleanness; the next two belong, I think, though in a curious way, to the offence of 'taking life.' They insist on the importance, in the erection of huts for the monk's use, of care to avoid 'danger,' that is, to animals, etc. etc., leaving a clear space round the building, that animals may not be inconvenienced or unintentionally killed. The remaining six are against faults which come under the head of 'falsehood,' such as deliberate lying, slander, obstinate false teaching, causing division, and so on.

The two rules called 'Aniyata' deal with faults connected with the first 'Condition of Defeat.' The next group, 'Nissaggiya Pacittiya,' deal with the special observances of the Community, the use of robes, bowls, rags, etc., restrict the monks to certain medicines, and forbid the use or possession of gold and silver. The ninety-two 'Pacittiya' rules contain a larger proportion of moral laws. The topics are

¹ *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. xiii. 4.

mixed together in the utmost confusion ; but in prominent places, for instance, at the beginning or end of a group of rules, come those against faults connected with the four great offences. Out of the ninety-two Pacittiya rules, about five are directed against taking life, and some of these are curious. Digging, for instance, lest worms should be killed, is entirely forbidden to the monk ; although agriculture is popularly held to be one of the harmless livelihoods, as not involving the taking of life. In connection with theft there is only one rule, against picking up and keeping a jewel which may have been dropped. Something like twenty rules are intended to guard against occasions of sexual offence. About ten are directed against lying, slander, and the like, or against pretensions to supernatural powers. There is only one that forbids spirituous liquors, and it is followed by several against indecorum ; a connection which probably confirms my view that it was on general grounds of indecorum and levity that these drinks were originally forbidden. The rest of the ninety-two Pacittiya rules are directed against breaches of the special rules of the Community, especially in regard to food. There are several against witnessing military parades and the like ; probably because war is a form of taking life.

The next group need not detain us. The last section of the Patimokkha consists of the rules of outward deportment, to which we shall hereafter return. In this place I need only notice that these

rules of deportment do not touch upon the general rules of conduct, except in one or two regulations, such as not to spit upon growing grass, which show minute consideration for living things.

In all this the reader will have observed that three classes of offences, the sexual, that of taking life, and that of falsehood, slander, and division, stand out in far the greatest prominence: that it is not thought necessary to dwell so much on theft, and that the prohibition of theft is not extended so as to forbid other forms of dishonesty; and that no emphasis is laid on abstinence from alcohol;¹ this last being treated as only one of the ceremonial restrictions, and not among the most important of these. A more prominent place, however, is given to it in the (not very ancient) discourse about the Four Stains (*Culla Vagga*, xii. 1. 3) where it is classed with sensuality, owning gold and silver, and low ways of livelihood.

With this view of the comparative gravity of offences the whole tenor of the books corresponds.

§ 3. The comparatively brief enumeration of offences which has here been sketched forms the *Patimokkha*, a manual for the use of the monks at their fortnightly meeting. This manual does not occur as such in the canonical books, but every sentence of it is to be found there, accompanied by a vast quantity of explanatory matter. The four *Parajika* Rules, as they stand in the *Patimokkha*, occupy not twenty lines altogether; but the four books called *Parajika*, at the beginning of the

¹ Alcohol as a medicine, *Maha Vagga*, vi. 14. 1.

Vinaya Pitaka, occupy one hundred and nine pages octavo. The thirteen Sanghadisesa Rules can be printed in a page; the thirteen books so called in the Vinaya fill seventy-seven pages. In short, the Patimokkha as a manual would perhaps occupy fifteen pages; while the Sutta Vibhanga, which represents it in the list of canonical books, occupies two hundred and sixty-six. The explanation given by the Sinhalese is that the larger book is the utterance of the Buddha, and the smaller a practical compendium extracted from it. European scholars, on the other hand, believe—and, no doubt, rightly—that the manual is the original, and the larger work an ancient amplification of it. The strongest argument for this lies in the nature of one part of the matter with which, in the Sutta Vibhanga, the Patimokkha is surrounded, viz., a word-for-word glossary or commentary on each sentence as it occurs. The sentences themselves were certainly prior to this glossary and comment (called by Professors Oldenberg and Rhys Davids, 'the Old Commentary'); and in all probability both sentences and glossary were far older than the rest of the amplification which forms the Sutta Vibhanga. Still, since the Sutta Vibhanga is a book of the canon, supposed by Buddhists to be the Buddha's very words, and as far as can be known, part of the canon from the earliest days of its compilation, we cannot leave it out of reckoning, and discuss the morality of the Buddhist 'sacred books' as if they contained only the Patimokkha.

The contents, then, of this first book of the Vinaya are as follows: First, in each case there is a history of the circumstances under which the Buddha propounded the rule. Then comes the rule, and then the verbal glossary and commentary. Then follow an immense number of illustrations, cases in which, as it is stated, doubt arose whether a monk was guilty or not. Every possible variety of theft is said to have been committed by monks, and the Buddha to have been asked in every case whether he was guilty, and in what degree, and to have replied, he is guilty of a grave fault, or of a serious fault, or not guilty, etc., as the case might be.

It is worth while, even at the expense of some tediousness, to give the reader an idea of the way in which moral principles are dealt with. I will take, therefore, a few samples out of the twenty-seven closely printed pages, which contain, with many abbreviations, the chapter on theft.

First a very long story—over four octavo pages—is told about a monk named Dhaniyo. The other monks at the end of the three months of ‘*was*’ or ‘retirement’ broke up the grass huts in which they had lived, and carried away the grass and sticks. Dhaniyo did not leave at the end of the wet season, but still, while he was on his rounds, the other monks broke up his hut and carried away the grass and sticks. This occurred three times. Now, Dhaniyo was a potter’s son, and so he made himself a very nice little hut of clay; but this, because it implied

some danger to animal life, the Buddha condemned, and ordered it to be destroyed. Dhaniyo next had recourse to the forester and begged some wood of him, and the forester gave him some cart-loads of the king's deodar timber. The prime minister inquired for the timber and was surprised to learn from the forester that the king had given it to Dhaniyo. He found on inquiry that this was not true, and the forester was brought bound before the king. But as he was being dragged along, Dhaniyo saw him, learnt the cause, and went with him to the king. The king treated the monk with great respect, and asked him whether it was true that he (the king) had given him the timber. He prevaricated about it, and was dismissed by the king with a severe rebuke. People were scandalised at this misconduct and untruth in one of the monks who made such high professions, and the matter was brought to the Buddha. The Community was called together, and Dhaniyo was publicly rebuked for taking timber when it had not been given. The Buddha then asked a monk who had formerly been a nobleman what was the *minimum* value of theft for which the king would execute, imprison, or banish a thief; and on learning that the amount was so and so (a 'pāda') he promulgated the rule :—

‘Whatever monk, with intent to steal, takes anything ungiven, being such as that kings, catching a thief taking it, would execute, imprison, or banish him, as a robber, a fool, a madman, or a thief—

that monk so taking ungiven is "defeated" and expelled.'

Then follows a story—nearly a page—of how some bad monks robbed the king's stores of a quantity of material for robes, and disregarded the Buddha's rule, on the pretext that it applied to a forest only and not to a town. This led to the promulgation of the rule in a new form, with the words, 'Whether in forest or town.'

Next come seven pages of definitions of the terms used in this rule, and in a curious gloss upon it, of which the following may serve as specimens:—

'Punish' means 'punish with hand, or foot, or rod, or stick, or half-rod, or by cutting;' 'bind' means 'bind with ropes, chains, fetters, or in house-prison, or city prison, or village prison, or town prison, or putting under restraint.' 'Banish' means 'banish from village, or town, or city, or district, or province.' 'In the earth' means 'goods placed in the earth, dug in, or covered.' If a monk looks a second time with thievish mind at goods placed in the earth, or looks for a spade or a basket, or goes near, he is guilty of a fault. If he breaks the sticks or creepers at the place, he is guilty of a fault. If he moves the earth, or lifts it, or takes it away, he is guilty of a fault. If he handles the pot, it is a fault; if he shakes it, of a great offence; if he moves it, of an unpardonable offence.

In the same sentence follow about twenty more possible cases, each with its gravity assigned. Of sentences like this, each with from ten to twenty

possible cases, there follow between twenty and thirty.

Then comes a section to this effect. A monk tells another monk to take away such and such an article. It is a fault. That monk, meaning to take it, takes it. Both are guilty of an unpardonable offence. A monk tells another to take away such and such an article; he, meaning to take it, takes away something else; the mistaken one is not guilty; the one who would take away is guilty of an unpardonable offence. A monk tells another to take something; he, meaning to take another thing, takes it. Both are guilty of an unpardonable offence. About seventeen more cases follow.

About fifty cases are then briefly enumerated. This ends the first 'section' on Theft.

The next section consists of about one hundred and fifty cases of the following form: 'At that time some mango-stealers dropped a mango and ran away. The monks, thinking, "Make haste, before the owners see us," with thievish mind, ate it. The owners blamed them as no true monks. They felt remorse, and went and confessed it to the Buddha, who decided that they had been guilty of an unpardonable sin.' The same with a jambu fruit (told in full). The same with a tamarind; and so on. One knows not whether to be more annoyed at the silly accumulation of cases, or at the utterly technical and uninstructional character of the decisions.

The explanation, which is given even now by Bud-

dhist authorities of this tedious accumulation, is that it was necessary to mention every form of theft, lest any form, not being specially forbidden, should be thought lawful. Such a notion was no doubt in the minds of those who were capable of covering leaf after leaf with these pretended instances. But it is not the notion of any one to whom moral principles are a living reality. It betrays a marvellous deadness of the moral sense—an utter ignorance of what constitutes the meaning and value of moral action or restraint. It is the work of men to whom conduct had become a matter, not of principle or motive or character, but of mechanical conformity to rule. Convinced as I am that these 'instances' were drawn up, not, indeed, after the Pitakas, for they are often alluded to in Pitaka books, and the knowledge of them commended, but long after the death of Gotama and his early disciples, I see in them a proof how the moral sense was benumbed by Buddhist views of life and by the manner in which the monks even then lived.

Let those who talk of comparing the Buddhist morality with the Christian, compare this method of illustrating a commandment with that by which Our Lord Jesus Christ, in the Sermon on the Mount, let in, by a word, a flash of light on the inner meaning and life of each precept as He touched it; or with the way in which His Apostle showed up the root and value of outward morality, when he said, 'Lie not one to another, brethren, for ye are members one of another.' The two moralities have no more in

common than a list of bones on paper has with a living body.

A worse thing has to be said. This method of innumerable illustrations, by pretended cases in which monks so acted, of every way in which a command can be broken, is applied to sexual offences with still greater fulness. The pages devoted in the Parajika book to the other three great faults together are about seventy, those devoted to offences against purity are forty. In the Sanghadisesa the proportion is even larger. It is impossible to do more than glance at the pages as one turns them over in disgust, but it is right to say deliberately that they go far beyond specifying all possible forms of licentiousness, to expatiate in regions of impossible and unimaginable obscenity.

I do not wish to put on this a worse construction than is absolutely necessary, but the least that can be said is this : the deadness of moral feeling, which can allow the moralist to compile such lists on *any* topic, is immensely more signal when he applies the method to this.

CHAPTER XIV

• RELIGION OF THE LAITY

SO far I have treated chiefly of the fundamental principles of morals—being parts of morality which are applicable to all, claiming to represent the eternal distinction between right and wrong,—and the special Rules of Monastic Conduct. Though I have regarded the Five Rules of Conduct as intended to be of universal application, I have been obliged to treat of them, as they were doubtless first promulgated in Buddhism, in the form specially applicable to the Community. We have now to look at these principles of conduct in the form in which they concern the ‘laity.’ For it has always to be borne in mind that the discipline of Buddhism, properly speaking, belongs primarily to the Community, and only in a secondary way to the laity, as ‘outsiders’ associated with the Community more or less closely. The teaching of the Buddha was for all living creatures in the ‘three worlds,’—for deities of every order, for men, and even for brutes; but his discipline was primarily for the members, male and female, of the Community, and secondarily for the laity

associated with them. For the layman, therefore, one at least of the Five Rules of Conduct takes a different form. He is not called to celibacy, but is required to be faithful to his wife.¹ Others of the Five Rules are less stringently bound upon him. He cannot be expected entirely to avoid taking life,² and it is never imputed as blame to him if he kills animals for the table. He incurs, indeed, the demerit of such actions, and their evil consequences in future births; that is his misfortune, and a good reason for abandoning, as an act of prudence, a mode of living which involves killing anything. But he may continue in it without any rebellion against Buddhism. The rule of abstinence from alcohol stands among the five, but no layman is blamed for not keeping it, unless after a special vow; nor have I ever met with any intimation of the breach of this rule being, as such, productive of birth in hells or in other low stages of being.

The layman's life, in its free condition, is full of danger, and almost inevitably involves demerit; but on the other hand, by well-placed gifts, seed well sown in the right field, that is, given to the Community, he can be ensuring a vast crop of merit. He may secure many births in heaven, and few in hells. But the layman is never any nearer to escape from existence, nor even secure of not going down into the three low states, as brute or as goblin, or in hell, until he has entered the course or paths of Buddhist training.

'Two whose mode of life and occupation are quite

¹ Angut. iv. 55.

² Maha Vagga, vi. 31. 13.

different, are not equal : a householder maintaining a wife, and an unselfish virtuous man. A householder is intent upon the destruction of other living creatures, being unrestrained ; but a Muni always protects living creatures, being restrained.

‘As the crested bird with the blue neck (the peacock) never attains the swiftness of the swan, even so a householder does not equal a Bhikkhu, a secluded Muni meditating in the wood.’¹

But there is no reason altogether to exclude the householder from the benefits of religion, as described in such sentences as the following :

‘He who has done meritorious acts is happy here, is happy after death, is happy in both worlds ; he is happy and delighted when he sees the purity of his own course of action (kamma). . . . He is glad when he thinks, I have wrought merit ; still more glad when he has entered on some happy condition (in the next life).’²

The Buddha was asked whether any householder, who had not abandoned the bond of household life, did, after the dissolution of the body, reach the end of sorrow. ‘No’, he replied. He was then asked : ‘Has any such householder gone to a heaven after death ?’ ‘Not one hundred,’ he replied, ‘nor two hundred, nor three, nor four, nor five hundred, but many more householders than that, without leaving the bonds of household life, have gone to heaven after death.’

¹ S. N. i. 12 ; *Sacred Books of the East*, x. ii. p. 35, and see *ib.* ii. 6 *ib.* p. 46.

² Dh. 18.

The case of the orthodox layman is thus much better than that of a heretical ascetic. For the next question was : 'Has any naked ascetic made an end of sorrow ?' 'None.' 'Has any gone to heaven ?' In ninety-one cycles I can remember only one naked ascetic gone to heaven ; and he held the doctrine of the fruit of actions and the necessity of action.¹

In another Sutta, Gotama is said to have revealed that multitudes of his lay followers, of pure and chaste lives, had got rid of the first five attachments, and were sure of entering Nirvana from the other world, without returning here ; that multitudes, even of householders, who lived in the enjoyment of worldly goods but were religious and attentive to teaching, were, past all doubt and secure of their future.²

Although, therefore, it is impossible to go straight from household life into Nirvana, it may be secured in the nearer or further future, and in any case a birth in some heaven may be expected by the good layman.

The regular course of instruction for laymen is as follows. The preacher speaks first of giving, then of conduct (the five precepts, etc.), then of heaven ; then he speaks of the evils of pleasures and the profit of retirement from the world. Only after these have been grasped, will he speak of the characteristic teachings of the Buddhas, the Four Truths, and the like. The doctrine of heaven and hell is especially the layman's doctrine.³

¹ Maj. Nik. 71.

² *Ib.* 73.

³ Udán, v. 3 *et pass.*

For a monk, indeed, the desire to be born, for instance, as one of the lower deities is a low motive ; it comes of desire ; and good conduct produced thereby is imperfect. But for layman and for women it is the recognised incentive. Those monks who attain supernatural vision and can see the re-births of others, see many entering in life on the various heavens ' through good conduct, in act, word, and thought.'¹ And the Buddha promised it, according to one passage,² to any one who had faith in him. A faithful husband and wife, if they are alike in faith, in conduct, in sacrifice, and in knowledge, may hope to be together in the next world as well as in this.³

These are cases of a continued course of religion ; but the layman is encouraged also by the prodigious rewards of single acts of merit. For a single offering of food, a person is often born in heaven,⁴ and that not once but for a long succession of lives. In fact the heavens are peopled, and even ruled, by deities who earned their place by such offerings.

On the other hand, there are innumerable places of torment, to which those go whose conduct has been bad in act, word, or thought, and who have been guilty of some single atrocious crime, such as that of the slanderer of Sariputta, or of Devadatta when he drew blood from the foot of the Buddha. Such and such a character, or the doer of such and such a deed, is frequently said to be ' as good as cast already into

¹ Maj. Nik. 4 *et pass.*

² Angut. iv. 55.

³ *Ib.* 22. *ad fin.*

⁴ Maha Vagga, vi. 24. 5, etc.

hell,' just as the virtuous are 'as good as gone to heaven already.'¹

The higher attainments and the final goal of Nirvana are thus left out of sight, and a simple religion is provided for simple folk. Theirs is in fact much more of a religion than the philosophical morality of the monks.

The lower state, as the condition of the householder is called, is not much thought of in the very earliest chapters of the Vinaya; the first disciples nearly all became monks and saints. But after King Bimbisara had become a follower of the Buddha, the doctrine became established in the eighty thousand townships under his rule, and the eighty thousand overseers of those townships were converted. They were first attracted, we are told, by a display of miracles. A monk, Sujāta, was ordered to exhibit his power by rising in the air and sitting there, emitting fire and smoke, appearing and disappearing and the like. The account of what followed (which I quote from Professor Rhys Davids' translation) is the type of all such conversions.²

'Then the Blessed One perceived by his mind the thoughts of the minds of those eighty thousand overseers over the townships, and held to them a discourse in due order; that is to say, he spake to them of giving, of righteousness, of heaven, of the danger, the worthlessness, the depravity of lusts, and of the

¹ An absurd series of purgatorial tortures is described in Sanyut. xix. 1 seq.

² Maha Vagga, v. 1. 9; *Sacred Books of the East*, xvii. pp. 4, 5.

advantages of renunciation. And when the Blessed One perceived that they had become pliant, softened, unprejudiced, upraised, and believing in heart, then he proclaimed that which is the special doctrine of the Buddhas, that is to say, suffering, its origin, its cessation, and the path.

* 'Just as a clean cloth, from which all stain has been washed away, would readily take the dye, just even so did those eighty thousand overseers over the townships obtain, even while sitting there, the pure and spotless eye of the truth, that is to say, the knowledge that whatsoever has a beginning, in that is inherent also the necessity of dissolution.

'And having seen the truth, having mastered the truth, having understood the truth, having penetrated the truth, having overcome uncertainty, having dispelled all doubts, having gained full knowledge, dependent on nobody else for the knowledge of the doctrine of the teacher, they said to the Blessed One :
"Glorious Lord! glorious Lord! just as if one should set up, Lord, what had been overturned, or should reveal what had been hidden, or should point out the way to one who had lost his way, or should bring a lamp into the darkness, in order that those who had eyes might see visible things, thus has the Blessed One preached the doctrine in many ways. We take our refuge, Lord, in the Blessed One, and in the Dhamma, and in the fraternity of Bhikkhus. May the Blessed One receive us from this day forth while our life lasts as his disciples who have taken their refuge in him!'

‘ And Sona Kolivisa thought, “As I understand the Dhamma proclaimed by the Blessed One, it is not easy to a person living as a layman to lead a wholly perfect and pure and altogether consummate life of holiness. What if I were to cut off my hair and beard, and to put on yellow robes and give up the world, and go forth into the houseless state ?” *

‘ And those eighty thousand overseers over the townships, having expressed their joy and delight at the words of the Blessed One, rose from their seats and respectfully saluted the Blessed One, and passing round him with their right sides towards him, went away.’

The following is a specimen of a sermon addressed to such lay disciples later in their course ; it is one that we often find repeated :—

Then the Buddha addressed the Pataligama disciples : ‘ There are these five losses, householders, incurred by him who does not obey the rules of conduct through his misconduct.’ ‘ What five ? ’ ‘ By neglect he incurs great loss of property, a bad report of him goes about ; if he goes into any company whether of warriors, or of Brahmans, or of householders, or of ascetics, he enters it without confidence and in confusion ; in the moment of death he is bewildered ; and after death and the dissolution of the body he goes to some evil condition or place of torment or hell. These are the five losses which are incurred by the man who does not obey the rules of conduct. Exactly the reverse is the case of the good man, and after death he goes to some happy condition or to heaven.’¹

¹ Maha Vagga, vi. 28, 4, abridged.

In regard to the regulation of married life, the teaching of the Pitakas is excellent;¹ and the ideal Brahmins or the Brahmins of old, are commended for that they did not buy their wives but married for love.² Very strong things are said against women and intercourse with them, but these are meant for monks; and we have seen above how husband and wife are taught to hope to see one another in the world to come.³

The Sutta called the Sutta of Happiness or good luck—the Maha Mangala Sutta—is especially intended for the laity. The favourite use of the word which forms its title is in reference to domestic festivals and home happiness. It commends especially, as among the greatest of blessings—‘Waiting on father and mother, protecting wife and child . . . giving alms, taking care of relatives, ceasing from sin, and from intoxicating drink, reverence and humility, contentment and gratitude, patience and pleasant speech,’—together with opportunities of intercourse with the wise and good, and of hearing the law and religious conversation.⁴ It goes on to extol Nirvana, but this picture of a quiet and religious domestic life is the characteristic part of the Sutta. It is constantly repeated now by the monks in Ceylon, and it is a great pity that nobody understands it.

¹ *E.g.* S. N. i. 6.

² Angut. iv. 55.

³ *E.g.* S. N. iv. 7, *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. x. p. 156.

⁴ S. N. ii. 4. See the whole in *ib.* p. 44. The next Sutta in importance as regards lay conduct is the Sigalovada Sutta, of which Professor Rhys Davids has given the substance in *Buddhism*, p. 143.

CHAPTER XV

GENERAL ESTIMATE

IN looking back at the moral system which we have sketched, the reader will no doubt be impressed by the vividness with which, from amid the dull enumerations, the merely imaginary stages of attainment, and the irrelevant metaphysical speculations, there stand out certain noble features, exhibiting a high ideal of purity, kindness, and moral earnestness. I do not wish to detract from that impression. I share it, and continued study of the books does not weaken it.

But I should not be putting the whole case before my reader unless I pointed out to him, not only, as I have done, the qualifications which apply to those points in which the Buddhist theory of morality excels, but also those regions of feeling and action in which it is almost entirely defective.

The emotions are as nearly as possible discarded. Their exercise is as far as possible restrained. The temper of kindness is not an exception to this, for it is only an attitude, not an active emotion. Thus

a large part of the sphere of duty is unprovided for. One is in danger of forgetting, in admiring the theory of self-restraint, that the emotions are in fact a region in which human excellence is very greatly exercised and developed ; and that a system which sets them aside, as if they tended only to evil, which knows nothing of good desires, righteous anger, holy sorrow, reasonable fear, or just hatred, so far libels human nature, and is doomed to be so far ineffective.

The motive which Buddhist morality recognises, if it can be said to recognise any, is wholly selfish and individual. It is not for the love of truth or goodness, nor for the benefit of others,—to instance the two principal motives recognised by other merely human systems,—it is solely for the individual's own advantage that he is incited to cultivate virtue. Nor is it a very brave or noble selfishness. It seeks, not to make the best of self, like the Greek selfishness, but to escape from pain and from the burdens of life. It is not ennobling.

And the idea of duty is utterly absent. From first to last, the sacred books are terribly consistent in failing to recognise any sort of 'obligation.' An indignant expostulation with some monk whose conduct is unworthy of the principles and the rule which he professes hardly amounts to an assertion that he *owes* anything even to the Community. Much as we read of effort, it is always effort for self, effort to attain independence and quiet ; never work for the sake of work, or work for the sake of others, or work

for the sake of duty. This system is unsocial. If it recognises the propriety of mutual kindness, it recognises—except in certain family relationships—no duty of mutual service or action.

For, in fact, it is in the main theoretic and artificial. It invites a man to turn his back on life; on human life as it is. In the contemplation of an endless series of lives, the paramount importance of this present life is overlooked by the theorist, and to some extent is concealed from all who are brought up to believe in that series of lives. To make the most of one's opportunity while one lives; to have done something before one dies—whether for one's self or for others—no such ambition is set before the Buddhist. He has no aim in life except to escape from it.

This defect spoils even the theory itself and the statement of it. They want enthusiasm. They want aspiration. Compared with the dead levels of the lists of vices and of the supernatural attainments, an expression here and there, in some isolated sentence, or some ecstatic outburst of the Buddha himself, or of one of his disciples in the delight of conversion, may have almost the ring of enthusiasm; but on the whole the Buddhist view of human hopes and possibilities is pale and cold. I will not contrast it with Christian hope: it is enough to turn from the Pitakas to a dialogue of Plato. There is much in Buddhist moral theory which may be contrasted favourably with parts of the Greek standard; but when one

turns from the Suttas to an utterance of Socrates, one feels as if one had escaped from some of those gloomy passages, which Plato describes, within the earth, to drive among the chariots of the gods along the open crest of heaven, catching sight, if only for a moment, of the eternal truths and feeling the capacities of immortality.

For with all its proud claims and assertions of attainment, Buddhism does in effect deny the high capacities of man. The Brahman ideal of absorption into the One Supreme Being was nobler and nearer truth. That Buddhism knows nothing of such absorption,¹ if only because it admits no such Supreme Being, is now at last beginning to be understood. The Buddhist theory makes the fatal mistake, of supposing that it is grand to have nothing and no one to look up to. The monk, if he has attained the further stages of his course, can look down, it is pretended, on deities and all that is divine. Sakra, prince of the gods, and the great Brahma himself, are supposed to pay homage to a monk. But this does not exalt the monk; it takes away from him the opportunity of being great. There is no reality about it; if it is a kind of greatness, it is one not compatible with humanity. Buddhism degrades man by denying that there is any being above him.

A similar complaint may justly be made against that which Buddhism does propose as man's final goal and aim, extinction or Nirvana. No language could

¹ See Note at the end of this chapter.

be too strong to express the indignation with which a true sense of human dignity rouses us to protest against this dreary calumny. But although the strict theory is that the goal of the saintly life is the extinction of existence, this plays but a small part among the considerations which the 'sacred books' enforce. To the ordinary layman, the prospect is held out of an indefinite continuance of life in happy places; and to the monk, if such there be, who aims at Nirvana, it is chiefly in this life, in a passionless calm beyond the reach of temptation, doubt, or effort, that he is taught to seek it. Here, as in many other points, the necessity of meeting to some extent the demand for reality has made the Buddhist system better than it logically ought to be.

But in view of such defects as I have been indicating, I cannot, for my part, rank this system, regarded as a theory of human life and action, with the best of those which, apart from Divine revelation, men have formed.

NOTE ON THE ERRONEOUS NOTION OF 'ABSORPTION,' ETC.

There is a popular notion that 'union with deity' is set forth in the Buddhist books as an aim or prospect. This is, I believe, a complete mistake. Such a doctrine would obviously be inconsistent with the other principles of Buddhism; and although Buddhism is not absolutely consistent with itself, it was hardly

possible that it, or any system, should find room for so glaring an inconsistency as this would be.

I have seen no passage which gives colour to it.

The notion is chiefly, if not entirely, founded on the language of the *Tevijja Sutta* (translated in *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. xi.) and parallel passages about (what is there rendered) 'union with Brahma.' Professor Rhys Davids, in his very able preface to the *Sutta* (p. 164), shows that 'union with Brahma' cannot, in this *Sutta*, mean adoption into God as the final goal of Buddhism; since, first, the idea of Brahma is not at all the same as the idea of God; and secondly, the union supposed could be only temporary—a 'temporary life as an angel in the Brahma heaven.'

But I am convinced that Professor Rhys Davids could safely have gone further on the lines of the words I have just quoted; and I confidently hope for his support—if he should read this—for what I am going to suggest.

The phrase 'a union with Brahma' in this *Sutta* represents three Pali phrases. *Brahmasahavyatā* (§ 41), *Brahmuno Sahavyupajo* (34, 81), and *Brahmānam Sahavyatā* (37). These mean respectively 'Brahma-companionship,' 'gone to the company of Brahma,' and 'companionship of *Brahmas*' (plural). The phrase, '(go) to be born in the companionship' ('*upapajjanti tassa sattassa sahavyatam*') is used in *Brahmajāla Sutta* (§ 4), where there is obviously no idea of absorption or identification, but only of *living under the same conditions*. Further, in the *Tevijja Sutta*, the aim or hope in question is illustrated, not by any simile which implies union or absorption, but by the supposed aim of getting to the sun or moon (16), the desire to climb up into a dwelling (21), to cross a river (23), to cross to a 'happier land' (36). Finally, Gotama says that he is like one whose native country the *Brahma world* is, and therefore he can be in no difficulty about the way to *that world*.

There is nothing final about Brahma-life. Ordinary people after life as a Brahma-god descend to human or infra-human births; but a fairly-advanced monk, if reborn in the Brahma-world, will pass thence into Nirvāna.¹

Whatever then may have been the meaning of *Brahma-sahavyatā* in Brahmanical doctrine, in the *Tevijja Sutta* it implies only

¹ *Angut. N. iv. 123.*

‘life in the Brahma world.’¹ In other places of Buddhism rebirth as Mahabrahma—the present Mahabrahma was once a man—is spoken of as attainable, and even after a Brahma-god life many descend even to infra-human births; but a fairly advanced monk will enter Nirvana thence.

Tissa Moggaliputta, who presided at the ‘Third Council,’ was ‘a Mahabrahma’ when he was invited to return to this world for that purpose.

If any doctrine of absorption is to be found in the Southern Buddhism, the texts for it have yet to be produced.

¹ The ordinary Buddhist phrase is, ‘Brahmalokupago.’

CHAPTER XVI

MEDITATION AND SUPERNATURAL ATTAINMENTS

THE theory of samádhi, the meditative state and the system of meditation, is seen in its commonest form on p. 334. The four stages of Jhána are briefly these. In the first the mind is at work, and both active pleasure and passive happiness are felt ; in the second, the mind has ceased to act, but there are still the feelings of pleasure and happiness ; in the third, active pleasure ceases, and a calm happiness alone remains ; in the fourth, nothing remains but indifference to all emotions alike of pleasure and pain.

The attainment of this fourth stage is the starting point of various kinds of supernatural powers.

First, as is seen in the Sutta on p. 335, the supernatural capacities are obtained, that of remembering one's own former existences, and that of seeing the passage of all beings from life to life, to which are elsewhere added that of reading the thoughts of others, etc.

Again, the power of working miracles—especially of flying through the air, water, or earth,—of causing

startling displays, especially of flames and smoke,—of creating for the occasion bodies, or the appearance of bodies, and the like,—these and other miraculous gifts are represented as universally possessed by those who have attained the final stage of meditation. Again; one who has reached the fourth stage of meditation can pass thence into the formless worlds. These are sometimes spoken of as worlds, sometimes as states. The latter is the case in the description of the Buddha's last meditation.

This is often extended to actual journeys to the different heavens—those of Brāhma, of the thirty-three gods,¹ etc.; and when monks are sent on errands of this kind it is sometimes noted, at any rate in the Commentaries, that they first entered the fourth stage of meditation. The method of getting into these states is that of fixing the mind very intently and exclusively on certain objects or topics; among which the body and its impurities hold the first place, impermanence, sorrow, and death, the second.

The following passage will show the mechanical nature of the process, akin, I suppose, to mesmerism, by which peculiar conditions are induced :

‘ And how does a monk abide in regard to the body observant of the true nature of the body? He goes into a forest, or to the foot of a tree, or into an empty house, and sits with his legs drawn-in cross-wise, his body set straight upright, and his conscious-

¹ See Childers's Dict., s. v. ‘ Jhānam.’

ness fixed before his face. With conscious recollectedness he draws in his breath, with conscious recollectedness he breathes it out. Drawing in a long breath, he is fully aware that he is drawing a long breath; or breathing out a long breath, he is fully aware that he is breathing out a long breath; so with a short inspiration or a short expiration. He trains himself to feel that the consciousness of breathing in or of breathing out pervades his whole body. He trains himself to feel that in breathing in or out he is calming the elements of which his body is composed. Just, monk, as a skilled turner,¹ or turner's apprentice, when he gives a long pull of the rope knows that he is giving a long pull, and when a short, a short one--so the monk is conscious (as said above).

'So he abides, as regards the body, externally observant of the true nature of the body, and (the same) internally, and (the same) both externally and internally; or he abides observant of the principles of origin in the body, or of those of decay, or of those both of origin and decay. Or the consciousness that it is body is firmly established in him, so as to increase to the full extent his insight and recollectedness, and he abides dependent on nothing, and does not lay hold of anything in the world.'²

¹ The allusion is to a turner who turns his lathe, or a driller who spins his drill, by pulling a string in alternate directions. The value of this attention to the breathing is said to be, that the monk thus learns that the breath does not constitute a soul but is only a constituent of the body. See *Questions of King Milinda in Sacred Books of the East*, vol. xxxv. p. 48.

² Maj. Nik. 10.

The process may be assisted by intently gazing at an object called a kasina—a small circle of earth, water in a bowl, a spot of light, or a board with nine or sixteen pierced squares like a skeleton chess-board. Many stones carved with the latter design are still extant in Ceylon.

Somewhat less mechanical is the account supposed to be given by Gotama himself of his own method.¹

Gotama says that before he was Buddha he inquired with himself into the pleasures, the dangers, and the way of getting rid of each of the four elements of earth, water, fire, and air. And he saw that the pleasure of each was whatever happiness arose from it; the danger was the tendencies in each to impermanence, sorrow, and decay; and the way to get rid of each was the restraint and abandonment of all desire and lust for it. When he had seen this he knew himself to be a Buddha.

Miracles being, as is pretended, of universal attainment to 'rahats,' are not treated as matters of great importance. Gotama despised them. He generally told one of his monks to make the display, if it was necessary in any case, to gain the attention of a layman or a multitude by such means. Those which he himself performed were, as a rule, such as the occasion rendered necessary, rather than displays intended to convince. (Those exhibited to the Jatilas are an exception, and are not the only reason for ascribing to that passage a later date than that of

¹ Sanyut. xii. 49.

the chapters which precede it.) He is represented as disparaging miracles as credentials, because any one may say they were done by magic, or by virtue of ordinary austerities.¹

They are far too common to be at all striking, and in no way associated with the person or peculiar gifts of Gotama. Gotama's disciples are not represented as owing their miraculous endowments to Gotama, or to their connection with him; nor is Gotama represented as doing anything which his followers could not also do.

ABSTRUSE QUESTIONS.

If the discussion of abstruse questions was discouraged by the Buddha, it is not because they were not—at any rate in the time of the compilers—much on men's lips. We read constantly of such questions as are raised by antinomian, fatalist, or materialist, theories of the eternity of matter, and so on; and also of schools which evaded all by asserting the impossibility of knowing.² What became of the Tathágata after death was a question which the Buddha often declined to answer. Whether 'Tathágata' in that place means, as elsewhere, 'the Buddha,' or, as is commonly said, 'the individual,' I cannot attempt to decide. The Buddha met such questions by the counter question: 'Where does the fire go

¹ Dig. Nik. xi. *ab init.*

² All these are called by a name, 'ditthi,' which, without absolutely calling them false, stigmatises them as mere 'views.' The word is generally rendered 'heresy.' Sixty-two are enumerated in Brahmajála S.

when it goes out ?' ¹ which leads him to the idea of the cessation of being by the removal of that on which life depends.

It may be worth while to give an abbreviated translation of this 'Vacchagotta's Fire Sutta.'

Gotāma was asked : 'Do you hold the view that the world is eternal ?' He replied, 'No.' 'That the world is not eternal ?' 'No.' 'That it has an end ?' 'No.' 'That it has not an end ?' 'No.' 'That the life and the body are the same ?' 'No.' 'That the life is one thing and the body another ?' 'No.' 'That the individual exists after death ?' 'No.' 'That he does not ?' 'No.' 'That he both exists and does not exist after death ?' 'No.' 'That he neither exists nor does not exist after death ?' 'No.'

'How is this ? You say "No" to all these questions. What is the evil that you see, that you entirely refuse to adopt any of these views ?'

'Every one of these is a mere view (a heresy), is holding ² to a heresy—belongs to the desert of mere opinion, the vain show of opinion, the writhings of opinion, the bonds of heresy; and involves pain, vexation, despair, and distress; it does not tend to dissatisfaction, or putting away desire, or the destruction or the quieting of it, or to knowledge, or absolute Buddha-insight, or to Nirvana.'

'Have you then any view ?' 'This phrase "view"

¹ Maj. Nik. 72.

² The word for 'holding' is like the word for jungle, and suggests the metaphor, which is carried on in the next word.

the Buddha has put away. The Buddha has *seen* this: What form is, and its cause and its end; what sensation, its cause and its end; what perception, what conformation, what consciousness, and the cause and ending of each. Thus by the elimination, the extinction, the destruction, the abandonment, the putting away, the disattachment of all fancied and imaginary notions of self-asserting individualist pride, the Tathagata is set free.'

'Whither does the monk, whose mind is thus set free, go to be reborn?' 'The phrase "going to be reborn" does not apply.' 'Then is he not reborn?' 'The phrase as "not being reborn" does not apply.' 'Then is he both reborn and not reborn?' 'No.' 'Is he neither reborn nor not reborn?' 'No.'

'To all these questions you answer, "No!" Here I am utterly at a loss, utterly confounded, and all the satisfaction I had in former conversation with you, Gotama, is gone.'

'Be not at a loss, Vaccha, be not confounded! This doctrine is hard to see, hard to understand, solemn,¹ sublime, not resting on dialectic, subtle, and perceived only by the wise; it is hard for you to learn who are of different views, different ideas of fitness, different choice, trained and taught in another school. So let me ask you, Vaccha, this question, and answer it as you will. What think you? if fire is burning before you, you know: This is a fire burning before me. If asked what causes that fire to burn,

¹ Translated, 'which brings quietitude of heart.' *S.B.E.* vol. xii. p. 84.

what would you say ? Its catching hold of grass and sticks (or, the fuel, viz. grass and sticks). If the fire goes out, you know that it is gone out ?' 'Yes.' 'And if asked where it is gone, east, west, north, or south, what would you say ?'

'The phrase does not apply, Gotama. When, by the exhaustion of the fuel, the grass and sticks, on which it has caught, and by the want of other supply, the fire has nothing to feed upon, it is said to be extinguished.'

'Just so, Vaccha, when that form, in virtue of which the individual is so called, is abandoned, rooted out, felled, destroyed, so that it can never come up again, the individual is freed from the appellation of form, is (in a condition) deep, immeasurable, difficult to sound as the great ocean ; the phrase "he is born" does not apply, nor "he is not born," or the rest. So when that sensation, and that perception, and those elements of being, and that consciousness, in virtue of which he was called an individual, are gone, none of the phrases about being born or not being born are applicable to the case.'¹

¹ D. N. 72.

CHAPTER XVII

CASTE

IT is not the case either that Gotama set himself to oppose the caste system, or that he announced as a prominent feature of his teaching—though he taught it—the equal admission of all (well-born) men into his Community.

He is represented as often speaking of the miseries of low caste,¹ and recognising the advantage of high caste, *ceteris paribus*.² The pride of his own Sakyan birth is owned, even in putting it aside;³ and the observance of caste rules by Brahmans is commended.

As a matter of fact, he found, according to the records, most of his early followers in the two highest castes. He is thought, however, by modern Buddhists to have preferred middle rank, and to have held the cultivator class (*gahapati*) the most favourable for religion, because these were not tempted to take life either as princes for pride, or, as the very low castes, from poverty.

¹ Sanyut. iii. 2. 1, etc.

² Culla Vagga, vii. 1, 4.

³ Angut. iv. 85.

⁴ Sutta N. ii. 7.

Had it been the intention of Gotama, or of the after writers of the Pitakas, to announce a revolt against the caste system, it is not likely that they would have taught—as the Buddhavansa, or history of Buddhas does—that all the previous Buddhas had been either Brahmans or Khattiyas.

Some have thought that he announced at least a protest of the royal caste against the exclusive assumptions of the Brahmans. But the fact that the same Buddhavansa represents a majority of the previous Buddhas as Brahmans shows that this was not the tradition among his followers. In fact the supremacy of the Brahman caste is not clearly marked in the Pitakas; it is implied that the Khattiya was the highest.¹

It is therefore an exaggeration to describe Gotama as a champion of equality against caste tyranny.

On the other hand, both his system and his teaching were indirectly opposed to it. All castes (of well-born men) were equally admissible to the Community;² it is not clear that any outcast would have been admitted. The idea of caste being a claim to *status* within the Community is repudiated;³ all such distinctions are merged in the Community as the rivers in the sea.⁴

And as regards the dominion of caste outside the

¹ Sanyut. iii. 3. 6, etc.; Angut. iii. 13. 1.

² Maj. Nik. xl. *et passim*.

³ Culla Vagga, vi. 6. 2.

⁴ Culla Vagga, ix. 1. 4.

Community, his teaching was calculated to undermine it. It was noble and just.

The passage in which Gotama is represented as refuting the notion that there is a difference of *species* between the castes has often been quoted; but cannot be omitted here. (The English reader may need to be reminded that the essence of 'caste' as distinguished from 'rank' is, that caste is a *birth* distinction, and supposed to be indelible. The word 'jāti,' which we render by 'caste,' means also birth.) This celebrated passage is the Vāsetṭha Sutta of the Sutta Nipāta, and is translated by Professor Fausböll in *Sacred Books of the East*, x. 109 *seq.* Vāsettha and Bhāradvaja refer to Gotama the controversy between them as to birth, whether one is a Brahman by birth or by deeds. 'I will explain to you, O Vasettha,' so said Bhagavat, 'in due order the exact distinction of living beings according to species, for their species are manifold. Know ye the grass and the trees, although they do not exhibit (it), the marks that constitute species are for them, and their species are manifold. Then (know ye) the worms and the moths and the different sorts of ants, the marks that constitute species are for them, and their species are manifold.'

The same is said of the four-footed animals, small and great; of the serpents, the long-backed snakes, of the fish which range in the water, of the birds that are borne along on wings and move through the air. As in these species the marks that

constitute species are abundant, so in men the marks that constitute species are not abundant. Not as regards their hair, head, ears, eyes, nose, lips, or brows; not as regards their neck, shoulders, belly, back, etc.; nor as regards their hands, feet, etc., or voice, are the marks that constitute species, as in other species. Difference then is in beings endowed with bodies, but amongst men this is not the case; the difference among men is nominal. For whoever among men lives by cow-keeping—know this, O Vasettha,—he is a husbandman, not a Brahmana.' 'And whoever among men lives by trade, he is a merchant, not a Brahmana. So with the artisan, the servant, the thief, the soldier, the king. And whoever among men lives by performing household ceremonies—know this, O Vasettha,—he is a sacrificer, not a Brahmana. And I do not call one a Brahmana on account of his birth or of his origin from (a particular) mother; he may be called "bhovádi," and he may be wealthy, (but) the one who is possessed of nothing and seizes upon nothing, him I call a Brahmana.' Then in twenty-seven stanzas the qualities of a good Buddhist disciple are enumerated as constituting the Brahmana: 'The man who knows his former dwellings, who sees both heaven and hell, and has reached the destruction of births, him I call a Brahmana.' For what has been designated as 'name' and 'family' in the world is only a term: what has been designated here and there is understood by common consent. Adhered to for a long

time are the views of the ignorant: the ignorant tell us, one is a Brahmana by birth. Not by birth is one a Brahmana, nor is one by birth no Brahmana; by work one is a Brahmana, by work one is no Brahmana, just as the husbandman, the artisan, the merchant, etc., are such by *what they do*. The discourse ends by insisting on Karma, the product of action, as the one great ruling force.

In Assaláyana Sutta we read (in Professor Rhys Davids's¹ translation) Assalayana says:—

‘The Brahmins, O Gotama, say thus: the Brahmins are the best caste (literally, the best colour); every other caste is inferior. The Brahmins are the white caste; every other caste is black. The Brahmins alone are pure; those who are not Brahmins are not pure. The Brahmins are the (only) real sons of Brahma, born from his mouth, sprung from Brahma, created by Brahma, heirs of Brahma. But what do you, sir, say about this?’

Then the Buddha asks him whether the wives of Brahmins are not subject to all the ills and disabilities of child-birth to which other women are subject. Assalayana is obliged to confess that this is so, and that the Brahmins put forward their claims in spite of this.

The Buddha then, applying our modern comparative method of inquiry, asks whether in adjacent countries, such as Baktria and Afghanistan, there are not differences of colour similar to those between the

¹ Hibbert Lectures, p. 52.

Brahmans and other castes, and yet in these countries whether slaves cannot become masters, and masters become slaves? Again Assalayana confesses the fact, and that the Brahmans put forward their claims in spite of it.

Then Gotama goes on to ask : ' How think you, Assalayana, is a man who is a murderer, a thief, a libertine, a liar, a slanderer, violent or frivolous in speech, covetous, malevolent, given to false doctrine—will such an one, if he be a Khattiya, or a Vessa, or a Sudda, be born after death, when the body is dissolved, into some unhappy state of misery and woe, but not if he be a Brahman ? '

Assalayana replies that the Brahman is in this respect exactly on a par with the others. Gotama then proceeds to put the contrary case, when Assalayana declares that those who do the contrary of all these evil things are equally reborn into some happy state in heaven, whether they are Brahmans or whether they are not.

Gotama asks what force or what comfort there can then be in the claim to especial purity which the Brahmans make. But he carries the argument still further. ' What think you, Assalayana, is it the Brahman alone who is able, in this land of ours, to cultivate friendliness, kindliness, charitable feelings ; or can the Khattiya, the Vessa, and the Sudda do so too ? '

And when Assalayana acknowledges that they are all equal in this respect, Gotama compels him to

grant also that they are equally pure in their bodies, and that the flame kindled by an outcast by means of two pieces of wood, belonging to a dog's drinking vessel or a pigsty, will light a sacred fire as shining and beaming and bright, and as good for sacrificial purposes, as a flame kindled by a Brahman or a Khattiya by means of sweet-smelling sandal-wood!

Then, still questioning, Gotama points out how—whereas when a mare is united with an ass, the offspring is a mule, different from both father and mother—the union of a Khattiya and a Brahman, or *vice versa*, results in offspring which resembles both the parents, with the obvious suggestion that there is not really any difference of species or caste between Khattiya or Brahman and half-caste or low-caste men, as there is in the case of a donkey and a horse.

Finally, Gotama asks the young Brahman scholar, 'To which of two brothers, one an initiated student and the other not, the Brahmans themselves would, on sacred and solemn occasions, give the precedence?'

'To the initiated student,' says Assalayana; 'for what thing given to an uninitiated person, not a student, will bear with it great advantage?'

'But if the initiated student be of bad character and evil habits, and the other be of good character and virtuous habits,' rejoins Gotama, 'to whom then will the Brahmans themselves give the precedence?'

'To the uninitiated,' is the reply; 'for what thing given to a man of bad character and of evil habits will bring with it great advantage?'

‘ But in the former answer you yourself, Assalayana,’ says the master, ‘ have given up the pre-eminence of birth, and in the latter the pre-eminence of acquaintance with the sacred words. And in doing so you yourself have acknowledged that purity of all the castes which I proclaim !’

When he had thus spoken, the young Brahman Assalayana, says the Sutta, ‘ sat there silent, awkward, distressed, looking downwards, reflecting, not able to answer,’

Then Gotama tells a story, winding up with a kind word to the young scholar. And the Sutta concludes with the confession of Assalayana: ‘ Most excellent, Gotama, are the words of thy mouth—most excellent ! May the venerable Gotama receive me as a disciple and as a true believer, from this day forth as long as life endures !’

In Madhura Sutta (Maj. Nik. v.) Gotama explains that all castes are ultimately equal, as the good, of whatever caste, will enjoy the like reward of their deeds in heaven, and the bad suffer alike in hell.

I add an abridged translation of Ambattha Sutta.

Ambattha, a young Brahman, is sent by his tutor, Pokkharasādi, to visit Gotama, and to find out whether the reports of his excellence are true ; in particular whether he has the thirty-two marks, which mark one, who, if a layman, will be an universal emperor, if a religious, a Buddha. The monks welcomed him as a very well-born and distinguished person whom the Buddha would be glad to talk to.

Ambattha showed some discourtesy by not sitting down respectfully as was usual, but walking up and down or standing when he saluted Gotama. Gotama asked him whether it was his custom to salute elderly Brahmans in that way. 'No,' said Ambattha; 'a Brahman before entering into conversation with another Brahman would adopt the same attitude as the person he addressed. But to shavelings, monkings, mere householders,¹ black men, men sprung from the foot of Brahma, we use the same manner of address as I have used to you.' Gotama then asked him to remember his business, adding that he assumed the airs of a person of culture only because he was really uncultivated. This expression 'uncultivated' made Ambattha very angry, and he became openly insulting. 'The Sakya race is haughty, abusive, hasty, and overbearing.' Such mere rich men, he said, ought to pay reverence to Brahmans. Ambattha then gives an instance of their rudeness. When he once went on some business to one of their gatherings they poked and nudged one another and made fun, but took no notice of him. Gotama replies that even sparrows chatter and amuse themselves in their own nests, and Kapilavastu is the Sakya's home. Then Ambattha plainly states his claim. 'There are four castes, Gotama, — Khattiya, Brahmans, Vaisyas, Sudras; of these four, the three (Khattiya,

¹ *Ibbhā*. Of this and the following word curious and inconsistent explanations are given. The above is the best I can arrive at, as being nearest to the literal meaning; but it is difficult to be satisfied with it.

Vaisyas, Sudras) are attendants to wait on the Brahmans, so it is not right that mere householders like the Sakyans should not reverence the Brahmans.' This was the third time the young man Ambattha applied the expression 'mere householders' to the Sakyans.

Then Bhagava thought: This is too bad, the way this young Ambattha is disparaging the Sakyans as mere householders. Suppose I ask him about his own clan? So Gotama asked him: 'Of what clan are you, Ambattha?' 'I am a Krishnayan.' 'The Sakyans then, if you go back in the genealogy, are descended from your masters, and you are descended from a slave of the Sakyans.' And this he explains by a curious genealogical legend, according to which the Sakyans were derived from some banished princes of the family of the great Okkāka, while the Krishnayans descended from a slave woman of the same king.'

Hereupon the young men who had come with Ambattha struck in to the conversation. 'Do not so severely disparage Ambattha as slave-born. Ambattha is a noble and learned youth, and well able to hold his own with you.'

To which Gotama replies: 'If you hold that Ambattha is ill-born, and ignorant, and unable to maintain the discussion, then let him stand aside and you carry on the discussion with me; but if you hold Ambattha well-born, and learned, and competent, then you please stand aside, and let Ambattha and me talk.'

To this they agreed. Gotama then proposed a question to Ambattha. The form in which it is proposed is very curious, singularly un-Socratic, but frequently occurs in the Buddhist dialogues.

‘Here, Ambattha, is a reasonable question which comes to you : against your will you must answer it. If you do not answer, or go from one thing to another, or are silent, or go away, then and there your head will split in seven. What think you, Ambattha ?’ What have you heard from the tradition of aged Brahmans as to the origin of the Krishnayans ?’

Ambattha was silent. Gotama repeated the question. Ambattha was still silent. Then Gotama said : ‘Answer now, Ambattha ; this is no time for you to be silent. Whoever fails to answer when asked a reasonable question by the Tathagata for the third time, his head will split in seven.’

At the same time a demon with a blazing iron sledge-hammer stood in the air over Ambattha, ready to carry out the threat. Ambattha saw him, and his hair stood on end, and he ran for protection to Gotama, and begged him to ask his question again.

And when the question had been repeated Ambattha acknowledged that the received tradition of the Krishnayans’ origin was exactly as the Buddha had stated it.

Ambattha’s friends were then as strong in disparaging his birth as they had before been in maintaining it, and Gotama begged them not to speak so severely of him as slave-born, for the slave girl’s son had become

a great Rishi, and had returned to King Okkáka and compelled him, by a threatening series of miraculous plagues, to give him his daughter.

Gotama then asked Ambattha, 'If a man is the son of a Khattiya by a Brahman woman, will he get seat and water among Brahmans?' 'He will.' 'And be admitted to share their dish and bowl?' 'Yes.' 'Will they admit him as a student of the mantras?' 'Yes.' 'Will they give him their daughters?' 'Yes.' 'Will Khattiyas anoint him to Khattiya rank?' 'No.' 'Why?' 'Because he is not born (of their caste) on the mother's side.' 'Will the son of a Brahman by a Khattiya woman be received to seat and water, bowl and dish, among Brahmans?' 'Yes.' 'Will they admit him as a student?' 'Yes.' 'Give him their women?' 'Yes.' 'Will Khattiyas anoint him?' 'No.' 'Why?' 'Because he is not born (of their caste) on the father's side.'

'Then, Ambattha,' says Gotama, 'whether you look at it from the woman's side or from the man's,¹ the Khattiyas are higher and the Brahmans lower. Take the case of a Brahman who is expelled in disgrace by his fellow-Brahmans, will Brahmans receive him, or eat with him, or teach him?' 'No.' 'Will they give him their women?' 'No.' 'But if a Khattiya is expelled by Khattiyas, will Brahmans receive him, feed him, and teach him?' 'Yes.' 'Give him their daughters?' 'Yes.'

¹ This rendering is hardly borne out by the commentary, but I can find no other intelligible.

‘Then even when a Khattiya is in the utmost disgrace, the Khattiyas are the superiors and the Brahmans the inferiors.’

• This has all been an *argumentum ad hominem*; the true moral is attached at the end.

‘It was a Brahman, Ambattha, who uttered the verse :—

“The Khattiya is best among those who reckon family,¹
But the man of perfect conduct and knowledge is best among gods
and men.”

‘And this, I think, Ambattha, is very well said.’

• In the Sanyutta Nikāya we read :—

‘The youth in whom mastery and strength are found
A king bent on war would enlist rather than one who by birth was
a son of the gods—
And so the man in whom are set the qualities of endurance and gentle-
ness :
That noble-living man the wise will honour, low-born though he be.’

The following comes from Sanyut. vii. 1. 9. I suspect it to be a purely Brahmanical, as it certainly is a very ancient, piece of verse :—

‘Ask not of race, but ask of conduct,
From the stick is born the sacred fire ;
The wise ascetic though lowly born
Is noble in his modest self-control.

¹ Ye gotta patisārino. Professor Rhys Davids, in a note to his *Questions of King Milinda (Sacred Books of the East, vol. xxxv. p. 229)*, renders thus : ‘Those who observe the rules of exogamous marriage,’ as if ‘going from family to family.’ As I do not know the learned Professor’s reasons, I follow the Buddhist authorities, ancient and modern ; and I must say I think their interpretation suits the context better. I think this is one of the cases in which the Pali and Buddhist use of a word has diverged from the Sanscrit and Brahmanic use.’

Subdued by truth, subject to discipline,—
 Perfect in sacred lore, trained in holy conduct,
 The truly invested sacrificer—him call to your rites,
 He offers seasonably, and is worthy of the gift.¹

But the fact is, this teaching is a 'commonplace' of the later Brahmanism as well as of Buddhism. In the Mahabhārata—where indeed there is a great deal that is thoroughly Buddhist in substance if not in origin²—we read for instance: 'The Brahmana who is vain and haughty, who is addicted to vices and wedded to evil and degrading practices, is like a Sudra. On the other hand, I consider a Sudra who is always advanced with these virtues—righteousness, self-restraint, and truthfulness,—as a Brahmana. A man becomes a Brahmana by his character.'

¹ I suspect that this originally meant, 'the sacrificer's fee,' and was adapted to the view of the Buddhist monk as the proper recipient of gifts,—the 'merit-field.'

² The Udyoga Parva is a link between the Tevijja Sutta, for instance, and the later Brahmanism.—See Udyoga Parva, pp. 133, 216 (English translation).

CHAPTER XVIII

DISCIPLINARY RULES OF THE COMMUNITY

THE disciplinary rules of the Community, as distinguished from the moral rules, need not detain us very long. They have in great part already come before us. The foundation, it is often said, of the monastic life consists in the four 'Resources,' the minimum of dwelling, dress, food, and condiments. These and their qualifications are dwelt upon, in the Vinaya Pitaka, in the minutest detail, by the enumeration, for instance, of all the possible materials of which slippers may or may not be made; but the important and characteristic features of the rule are but few. The chief topics may be thus distinguished: the conditions and ceremonies of admission into the Community; the method of conducting its business, in what we should call 'chapters;' and the seasons for assembly and retirement.

Admission, etc.—Boys were to be admitted to the condition of novices—who had renounced the world but not entered into the full profession of the Community—from the age of fifteen,¹ though in exceptional cases boys might be admitted earlier—when old 'enough to

¹ Maha Vagga, i. 50.

scare crows.¹ The candidate was to have his head shaved, to put on the yellow robes, and to declare his trust by the three-fold repetition of the formula: 'I take refuge in the Buddha, I take refuge in the Doctrine, I take refuge in the Community.'²

Each younger monk was to be under a tutor, and the relation between them was to be like that of son to father, every possible respect, attendance, and consideration being due on the part of the pupil, and all possible help and guidance on the part of the tutor.³ A very similar relation was that between scholar and instructor; in fact, it is hardly possible to say what the distinction between the two relations was.⁴ A tutor was not to present more than one novice at a time, unless he was himself unusually competent.

Cripples and deformed persons, slaves, debtors, and criminals, persons in the king's service, and *animals*, were expressly disqualified from admission;⁵ nor could any one be admitted without the express permission of his parents.⁶

The novitiate continued at least until the age of twenty, and then full admission might be conferred. This important ceremony could not take place except

¹ Maha Vagga, i. 51.

² *Ib.* i. 54.

³ *Ib.* i. 25. It does not appear that at first this relationship ended with the full profession of the pupil. Maha Vagga, i. 31. 33.

⁴ *Ib.* i. 32.

⁵ See Maha Vagga, i. 63. It is amusing to read 'Let the animal, O Bhikkhus, that has not received the "upasampadā ordination" not receive it; if it has received it, let it be (expelled from the fraternity).' *Sacred Books of the East*, xlii. p. 219. The second question asked of the candidate for full admission was to be 'Are you a human being?'

⁶ Maha Vagga, i. 54; see Ch. iv. p. 59.

in a chapter of at least ten, and the monk who, as tutor, presented the candidate, must have been himself at least ten years in full profession.¹ The candidate was to be warned, lest he should afterwards find the life harder than he expected, that he could not expect more than the minimum of necessary things, etc.: viz., for food, morsels given in alms; for clothing, rags from a dust-heap; for dwelling, the foot of a tree; for medicine, or condiment, a filthy liquid. All beyond these, he was to be warned, was indulgence—not forbidden, but not to be claimed.

The candidate, having been carefully instructed as to his part in the ceremony, was asked whether he was in any way disqualified; for instance, by leprosy or certain other diseases, by debt, etc.; whether he was twenty years old, and had his parents' consent; and who was his tutor. He then made his humble request three times to the Community to 'draw him out' (of the world) and receive him. A resolution to that effect having been duly proposed and carried, he repeated the refuges, was warned of the four great faults which involve expulsion,² and so was received into full status in the Community.³

Assemblies, chapters, etc.—The institution of the Uposatha,⁴ or day of strictness ('abstinence' in a general sense, rather than 'fasting'), is said to have

¹ Maha Vagga, 31, 49. ² Maha Vagga, i. 78; see Ch. xiii. p. 193.

³ It is curious that this procedure is not laid down in any one place in order, but has to be collected from scattered chapters. See Professor David's note, *Sacred Books of the East*, xiii. p. 233.

⁴ Sinhalese 'pohoya,' popularly 'poya.'

privately to a brother monk before coming into the assembly,¹ and that if a fault occurred to the memory of any one who had come, he should privately consult his neighbour about it.² Out of this probably grew the latter form of the procedure, according to which each monk was to make confession secretly to his neighbour.

Here may be mentioned a somewhat similar ceremony called Paváraná, which was appointed³ to take place at the end of the annual retirement, or 'was.' The monks were to assemble, and each in turn, from the eldest down, was to invite the rest to tell him of any fault which had been seen or heard or suspected in him. With the principle of such a ceremony, the detailed rules (as in the case of the Patimokkha) are inconsistent; for they assume that the course will be, if any fault is alleged, not to tell it in answer to the above invitation, but by alleging it beforehand to exclude the delinquent from the ceremony altogether. The theory of mutual candour, on which the institution was based, was too high for practice. The detailed rules are concerned with preventing false accusations.

On *uposatha* days it is not originally prescribed that any other business should be done besides the recitation of the manual, but it seems clear that it was on those days, as a rule, that the other business of the Community was transacted in chapters. Whether the matter in hand were the admission of a novice or a

¹ Maha Vagga, ii. 27. 1.

² *Ib.* ii. 27. 4.

³ *Ib.* iv.

monk, the appointment of a reader, a manager of the dining-hall, or other officer, the delimitation of boundaries, the decision of a disputed question about a rule or a text ; in every case the chapter proceeded by a fixed method of resolution. A leading or senior monk proposed it, saying, ' Let the Community of mendicants hear me ! Such and such a thing is proposed. Let any one who is in favour of it be silent, and any one who is against it speak. I put it to you the second time (in the same form) and a third time.' He then announces the result : ' The Community is in favour of it, therefore it is silent. This I take to be the decision.' In some cases the proposals were announced only once before the question was put, but the method was always substantially the same. In such chapters members guilty of the great offences were to be expelled ; others were to be censured, suspended, or restored. The Uposatha Hall would thus grow to be, what it is now in Ceylon, the chapter-house of the local branch of the Community.

Seasons, etc.—Was.—The rule that a portion of the year should be spent, not in travelling about, as the Buddha and his followers at first travelled, but in retirement, is said to have been suggested to Gotama by the complaints of people who were scandalised at seeing his monks walking about at that season. In the rains, they said, the earth is covered with young plants and multitudinous germs of life, and even the heretical ascetics are careful to avoid injuring these, and make themselves retreats, as the birds make them-

selves nests, at that season of the year.¹ There was a choice of two periods for beginning the retreat,—the full moon of June-July and that of July-August; in either case it was to last three months. For an urgent need, connected with religion, the monk might leave the place in which he had resolved to keep the 'was' (rainy season), but on no account for more than seven days. Care was to be taken in the choice of a place, lest the period should be interrupted; and several unsuitable places or modes of retirement, such as the branch of a tree, or under an earthenware vessel, were forbidden. It is curious, however, and an indication of the unreality of these rules, that to spend the time in a caravan on a journey, or in a ship, was allowed.²

The place seems, as a rule, to have been a regular Vihāra, often apparently that in which the monk always lived (by Buddhaghosha's time this seems to have been the usual way³), but already in Gotama's time the custom began which now gives its character to the 'was' in Ceylon, of great people inviting monks to spend the 'was' with them.⁴

There is no prescribed way of passing the time, nor are any special duties assigned (in the Vinaya) to this season of 'the rain.'

On the whole, the life of a member of the Buddha's Community was encumbered by very few rules. Of rules to prevent indulgence there is an immense ac-

¹ Maha Vagga, iii. 1.

² Maha Vagga, iii. 12.

³ See the passage quoted, *Sacred Books of the East*, xiii. 299 n.

⁴ Maha Vagga, iii. 14. 1.

cumulation, but there was very little demand made on the monk's time. The aim in view was to secure him freedom, and to leave him time and room to train himself. Against idleness and all the other ills which too much leisure and too much solitude bring, the precautions were few and ineffective. In contrast with the endless interference with individual freedom which marked the Brahman system, the liberty which Gotama offered must have been charming indeed. But a life almost without social duties and entirely without necessity for exertion, physical or mental, is not a life which the average man can lead with safety. As Aristotle said of solitude, it is fit only for either a god or a beast. There is too much propriety in the favourite similes in which it was compared by the Buddhists themselves to the life of an elephant or a rhinoceros.

CHAPTER XIX

THE FEMALE COMMUNITY .

THE Community of Nuns was never in practice a very important part of Buddhism, either in the primitive Indian system or in Ceylon ; though it may have been specially fostered for a while in Asoka's day. It is represented in the Vinaya Pitaka as an afterthought, and as one reluctantly admitted by the Buddha. The part of the Vinaya which contains this is closely associated with parts which are, by their own showing, of late date, certainly after 381 B.C., and, as I think, little, if at all, earlier than 250 B.C. But the lateness of the book (C. V. x.) does not prevent our believing that a true tradition is recorded in it. Gotama is said to have been entreated to form a community of nuns, on the pressing and repeated application of his aunt, Mahápajápati, who had nursed him after his mother's death. Three times the application was refused. Mahápajápati cut off her hair and put on yellow robes, and appeared travel-worn and tearful before Ananda, who was moved to plead her cause. Even to Ananda the request was granted only with great reluctance. Eight rules were laid down, which appear mainly

intended to regulate the relation of dependence, in which the female community was to stand towards the male; and Pajápati was admitted. Nothing is said of the admission of others with her, but it is constantly taken for granted that there were many. Thus, although the application of Pajápati is recorded in detail, the account of the formation of the Female Community is very meagre indeed in comparison with that of the Community of Men.

But what is most curious is the prophecy attributed to the Buddha in reference to this institution. He had no sooner instituted it than he announced, as we read, that it would be the ruin of his work! 'If, Ananda, women had not received permission to go out from the household life and enter the homeless state, under the doctrine and discipline proclaimed by the Tathágata, then would the pure religion, Ananda, have lasted long; the good law would have stood fast for a thousand years. But since, Ananda, women have now received that permission, the pure religion, Ananda, will not now last so long; the good law will will now stand fast for only five hundred years. Just, Ananda, as houses in which there are many women, and but few men, are easily violated by robber burglars, just so, Ananda, under whatever doctrine and discipline women are allowed to go out from the household life into the homeless state, that religion will not last long. And just, Ananda, as when the disease called mildew falls upon a field of rice in fine condition, that field of rice does not continue long;

just so, Ananda, under whatsoever doctrine and discipline women are allowed to go forth from the household life into the homeless state, that religion will not last long. And just, Ananda, as when the disease called blight falls upon a field of sugar-cane in good condition, that field of sugar-cane does not continue long; just so, Ananda, under whatsoever doctrine and discipline women are allowed to go forth from the household life into the homeless state, that religion does not last long. And just, Ananda, as a man would in anticipation build an embankment to a great reservoir, beyond which the water should not overpass; just even so, Ananda, have I in anticipation laid down these eight chief rules for the Bhikkhunis, their life long not to be overpassed.'¹

It is not likely that this would have been inserted without some foundation. It is followed by Rules for Nuns, but these contain very little that is of importance. They were to follow the rules prescribed for monks as far as they were applicable, and in other matters to be guided by their own sense of what was best. Their relation to the Community of men was altogether dependent. Their acts were not valid without confirmation by the monks, and they had to repair to the monks for instruction. •

In other parts of the Vinaya the existence of nuns is constantly taken for granted, but there are scarcely any direct accounts of them or of any institutions connected with them. The pious women who

¹ *Culla Vagga*, x. 1, 6; *Sacred Books of the East*, xx. p. 325.

are prominent, and there are many, in the Vinaya, Pitaka narratives, are not nuns.¹

In other Pitaka books it is the same, with at least one exception. The 'double-community' is constantly taken for granted; all that has been said of the monks is constantly repeated of the nuns, but their existence is still chiefly a theoretical existence.

Professor Oldenberg (*Buddha*, p. 381) says: 'It is to be doubted, whether at any time there was inherent in the spiritual sisterhood a degree of influence which could be felt, bearing on the Buddhist community as a whole.' This is a very cautious way of stating it. The Professor remarks in a note that the numbers given in the Dipavansa of monks and nuns in Asoka's day, exaggerated as they are, throw a certain light on the relative importance of the two orders. 'The chronicle speaks of 800,000,000 of monks, and of only 96,000 nuns; ' one nun to more than 10,000 monks.'²

The exception (known to me: there may be others) is the book called Therigáthá, or 'Stanzas spoken by female elders.' The verses which this book contains are, some of them, old; but the greater number belong to the latest stage of the Pitaka collection, being crowded with technical terms and lists, and being in fact, in some instances, summaries of the allusions, metaphors, and striking expressions which the older books contain. In most

¹ No individual nun is mentioned, with a very trifling exception, in the Vinaya, except Pajāpati and Uppalivannā, both in Culla Vagga, x.

² But there are many instances in which the proportion is very different.

cases these verses have no historical setting, and throw no light on the history of the institution of nuns. In a few, they are attributed to persons whose names occur in the Vinaya in connection with Gotama's life, such as Mahápajápati, his aunt, Nandá, Ambapáli, etc. But even in these cases, they are merely verses which any one might have written, and to which those names are affixed. It cannot be said, therefore, that the Therigáthá add anything to our knowledge of the nuns.

Most of them narrate, very briefly or at some length, the religious 'experiences' of the supposed authors. They generally end by saying: 'I have attained Nirvána;' 'this is my last body;' 'Mara (or death), thou hast no more power over me.' Some say: 'It is now just a week since I attained emancipation.'

They say how long they had gone on—sometimes many years—without making any progress, and on what occasion they were converted. Several claim to have been converted by the Buddha himself, and at such and such a place. A great many owe their conversion to a very earnest nun called Patácára. And they tell us of their former life. 'I was rich and lived in luxury;' 'I was high born and courted by many;' another was a fire-worshipper, or a heretic, or a very bad woman. Some comment on their own loss of beauty, and draw a moral from the ravages old age has made on them.

Several of the later and longer passages describe nuns resisting the entreaties of lovers who say:—

'An' ye sall walk in silk attire,
And siller hae to spare ;'

or of parents who urge that the suitor

'is chief of Erringtoun,
And lord of Langly Dale.'

The last of all is an elaborate and almost romantic account of the Princess Sumedha, whom the beautiful prince Anikaratta, with all that her parents could do to aid him, tried in vain to divert from her resolution to renounce the world.

As regards later history, Asoka speaks in the latest (probably) of his edicts of the many 'female mendicants.' This is indisputable evidence of the existence of the institution in his day. In the account of Mahinda, the converter of Ceylon, and his sister Sanghamitta, the bearer of the Bo-branch, we shall see great importance given to the female community, as founded in Ceylon. The Mahavansa tells us what multitudes of women then entered it. But the position of the institution in the Mahavansa is very similar to its position in the Vinaya Pitakā. After its foundation it hardly appears again, except in allusions. The existence of a female community is taken for granted,—a king sends his daughter to the convent, or he builds a hall for the nuns,—but except in this incidental way, they make no figure in the chronicle.

The traditions of Ceylon are in keeping with this. There are, so far as I know, no places named after nuns; no stories about famous nuns; none of their dwellings or halls, so far as we know, remain.

In the later centuries, when the Sinhalese kings brought monks, to revive the institution of monks, from Burma or Siam, we never read of their bringing nuns, or noticing the want of them. There are none in Ceylon now; and the received opinion, I believe, agrees with the conclusion to which I have been led, that the institution of female mendicants was never much developed either in Magadha or in Ceylon.¹

¹ The subject is treated historically in Ch. xxvi. p. 391.

CHAPTER XX

ASOKA

THE earliest, and indeed very far the earliest point, at which we can say that there is indisputable historical evidence in regard to Buddhism, is the point furnished by the Edicts of Asoka.

The genius of Indian nations seems to have been at all times averse to history, and it is commonly said that India offers no solitary instance of a historical work till the Sinhalese Pali chronicles of the fourth and fifth century A.D. These chronicles are evidently founded on records which, for perhaps several centuries, had been kept in the Buddhist monasteries. When and at what date they began to be kept we have at present no means of saying; but the records which the chronicles of the fifth century embody certainly contain—as we shall presently see—genuine material, from a date as far back as the time of the Edicts. But the veracity of the chronicles is an inference from their agreement with the Edicts, and it is in the Edicts alone that we obtain first-hand contemporary evidence.

These Edicts were carved in stone in the second and third quarters of the third century B.C.

●Of many of them there are a considerable number of contemporary copies, each edict having been engraved, by order of the king, in a number of widely distant places. Of others there are but two copies, and of some only one; but all suspicion that any of them may be a later forgery is excluded by the nature of the material, the form of the writing, and the contents. The date of some is proved beyond dispute—if they are not forgeries, which has never been suggested—by the mention in them of the Greek kings of the Bactrian Empire in North-west India, who are claimed by the writer as his contemporaries.

To go a little further into detail. These inscriptions of Asoka are carved, some on the living rock, some on pillars, and some on tablets. There are thus three groups, among which the rock-inscriptions are the oldest, and with one exception, the most interesting. Which is older and which later is not a matter of conjecture; for the king tells us, in most instances, in what year of his reign the particular inscription is set up. The fourteen rock Edicts date from the thirteenth and fourteenth years of his reign, two of the tablets from the thirteenth, the pillars from the twenty-seventh and twenty-eighth years, and the (second) Bairât or Bhabra inscription (which is on a granite boulder small enough to have been removed to the Museum at Calcutta) is probably latest of all. The last mentioned is of peculiar interest.

The reader will see that we have here guaranteed contemporary evidence for the facts—whatever they

are—which the inscriptions disclose, as to the events, and the state of things in the reign of their author. Who then was their author? The name of Asoka is not to be found in them. The author is Piyadasi, or in full, Devánampiya Piyadasi Rája (King Piyadasi the delight of the gods), as he styles himself in most of them. Here is the most usual beginning: 'King Piyadasi, the delight of the gods, says.' Why then are these still popularly called the 'Edicts of Asoka'? Because Asoka and Piyadasi are two names of the same person, and Asoka is the one by which he is best known to the Sinhalese Chronicles, and from them was first known to the European world.

The history of the identification of Piyadasi with Asoka is one of the romantic chapters in the history of knowledge.¹ Charles Turnour, a high official in the Ceylon Civil Service, made acquaintance, by the help of Sinhalese scholars, with the Pali Chronicles—the Mahawansa or Great History, and the Dípawansa or History of the Island—which had been preserved in Ceylon, and he published² a description of the former, with a translation of part of it, which laid the foundation of all subsequent study, both of the Pali language and of Buddhist history. The portion to which his attention and that of his readers was specially directed was that earlier part of the chronicles which includes the record of the conversion of the island to Buddhism by Mahinda in the days of the great Asoka.

¹ Sénart's *Inscriptions de Piyadasi*, vol. i. p. 3 seq.

² 1837 A.D. and onwards.

● It was there described how the grèat Asoka, king of Magadha, had been a famous patron of Buddhism. Having been originally a Brahman, he was converted, said the historiàn, to Buddhism, and set himself to propagate it all over his vast kingdom, which extended over the whole of India, and even beyond the borders of his dominion. He erected innumerable 'dágabas' or relic-shrines, and maintained innumerable monks. He sent out missionaries to preach the Buddhist doctrines everywhere; and in particular, under his auspices, his son Mahinda introduced them into Ceylon. •

Such was the statement of these old Pali chroniclers which Mr. Turnour brought to light. But this was not all. The chronicles were not indefinite, but dealt with dates. They contained a complete list of kings, not only onwards from the regions of mythology to the days of Gotama Buddha, but from those days onwards without intermission to the dates at which they could be adjusted, in the sixteenth and following centuries, with European history. Turnour then gave to the world a chronological history of Buddhism, which included, of course, a definite date assigned to Asoka. It was true that, beside the list of kings, with the length of each one's reign, ran another list, that of the succession of presiding monks, and that the two lists did not exactly tally; but the discrepancy was only of some sixty years, and Mr. Turnour suggested a very probable way of accounting for it. Thus to those who were acquainted with Mr.

Turnour's work, Asoka was a known personage with a definite character, and a definite place in history.

This was known, however, to comparatively few, when, from the other end of the vast region which Asoka claimed, the other side of his history—the other half of the token—was brought to light. Asoka began to speak for himself; or rather, Piyadasi spoke, and his tones and language revealed his identity with Asoka.

In the years 1837 and 1838 the indefatigable genius of James Prinsep, by comparison of many scattered inscriptions and coins, discovered the key to the long-lost alphabet, or alphabets, in which these edicts, and a quantity of monuments only less ancient, are engraved. The deciphering of unknown alphabets, though by the aid of a bilingual text Champollion had accomplished it for the hieroglyphics, was a less common achievement than it has since become, and there were but few hints from outside the inscriptions themselves. But Prinsep noticed, while copying a certain group of short inscriptions, each of which stood by itself on one of the pillars round the dagaba of Sanchi, that two characters occurred invariably at the end of each. The pillars seemed likely to contain the record of some pious offering, and the inspiration came to him that these characters might be the word for 'gift.' He applied this key, tested the two letters in one connection after another under that supposition, and found that it solved the problem; the two letters with the point

which followed them did represent DĀNaM 'donation.' In a marvellously short time,—for the characters are large and the inscriptions are in the main extremely distinct,—several inscriptions, those on the Pillar of Feroz Shah at Dehli and others, had been provisionally deciphered, and an attempt at a translation was published. They contained such passages as the following :¹—

'Thus saith King Piyadasi, beloved of the gods, I have caused this edict to be engraved in the twenty-seventh year of my consecration.

'What is this religion? It is to avoid evil and to do good, to practise kindness, truth, and liberality, and purity of life.

'I have given alms to men and animals, supplied them with water, etc. I have instituted officers to promote religion in all the countries,' etc.

Mr. Turnour no sooner saw the proceedings of the Asiatic Society of Bengal than he sprang, with a confidence which further inquiry justified, to the conclusion, that these were inscriptions of the Asoka of the Mahawansa. The evidently vast extent of his rule, the name of Magadha itself,² the humane tone of his proclamations, were enough to invite the identification; the statement that he had not always held the same views, but had formerly been regardless of the life of animals, that his conversion occurred some

¹ Not taken exactly from any one edict, but see second Pillar Edict.

² It is found only in the inscription of Bairat. In the fifth Girnar Edict the king writes 'at Pataliputta,' where the corresponding copies have 'here.'

years after his enthronement, and other such coincidences, made it almost a certainty. But when it was further disclosed that in one of the edicts were mentioned certain Greek kings, Ptolæmy, Magas, and others, whose date approximately coincided with that which the Pali Mahawansa ascribed to Asoka; and further still, that Asoka was said, in the chronicle, to have been the grandson of Chandragupta, while Greek history placed in the same place and date a Sandrakottus (an almost exact transliteration of the same name) the fact that one was Asoka and the other Piyadasi could not stand in the way of the identification. For, indeed, what does Asoka mean, but 'sorrowless,' or Piyadasi but 'beholder of delight'? They were both rather epithets than names, and of kindred meaning.

But whatever doubt might remain in the most sceptical mind was soon to be removed. It was soon observed that, although the Mahawansa knew this monarch only as Asoka, its sister chronicle—its elder sister, if not its parent chronicle—the Dipawansa (history of Ceylon) knew him as Piyadasi. When the lines, 'Asoka was anointed king in Mahinda's fourteenth year. Asokadhamma, after his coronation, obtained the miraculous faculties; exceedingly splendid and rich in meritorious works (he was) universal monarch of Jambudīpa. They crowned Piyadassi, etc,'¹ were quoted, the question was at an end. The veracity of Turnour's Ceylon chronicles

¹ Dip. vi. 22-24, Oldenberg's translation.

was established to an unexpected extent, and the edicts could be studied with the certainty that they were contemporary evidence of a known date. Further discoveries and decipherment added further confirmation to this conclusion.¹

The reader will now wish to know what are the contents of these inscriptions, which promise information so certain. Is its extent and definiteness equal to its historical certainty?

First, however, it will be well to state with more detail the proof of Piyadasi's position in chronology; and in order to do that I must give a fuller account of the inscriptions. The order in which they were discovered is less important for this purpose than the order in which they were issued by the king.

The rock-inscriptions fall into two groups. In the earlier group, there are five principal rock-inscriptions, all bearing the name of Piyadasi,—one at Gīrnār in Gujarat district, carved on the face of a nearly vertical rock, in letters some $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches in length, and covering a space some 17 feet in height, by about 8 feet at the base: another, somewhat similar in position and extent, and containing in the main the same contents, at Dhāuli in Orissa; a third, at Jaugada in the same district; at Khālsi, near Masūri, on the Upper Jumna, there is a fourth. All these are in the same characters, and except in so far as some—those of the two Orissa rocks especially—are

¹ The supposed date, '256 years after the Buddha,' in the *Sahasarām* Edict, rested on a mistranslation. See note on p. 276.

defaced or defective, all contain the same contents, with variations which, for our present purpose, are trifling. Another at Sháhbáz-garhi, near Kapur-di-giri, in the far north-west, not far from Attock, on the Upper Indus, is in a different writing, but has substantially the same contents. Each of these inscriptions is not one edict, but a series of edicts, the total series numbering fourteen. But the whole fourteen do not appear on each rock : all fourteen are at Girnar, at Khalsi, and at Kapur-di-giri, but only eleven at Dhauli, and at Jaugada ; nor are all perfect in each place, nor are the different copies identical in every detail.

Though issued in succession, at intervals within a period of three years, between the eleventh and the fourteenth years of the king, they appear, on each of the rocks where they are now found, to have been all engraved at the same time, that is, after the issue of the latest, which was probably engraved in the king's fourteenth year.

It is utterly improbable that the five rocks which have been discovered were the only ones on which these edicts were inscribed ; they are no doubt the survivors, through the chances of twenty centuries, of a multitude of which the majority have disappeared.¹ On some—on one at least—of the lost ones, the

¹ The king writes in the fourteenth Rock Edict, ' My realm is vast, and I have cut many inscriptions, and shall have (many more) cut.' And in the eighth Pillar Edict he speaks of the ' doctrine-pillars ' which he has set up ; and at the end of that edict he implies that it will be engraved both on rocks and on pillars in many places.

edicts were probably inscribed, not all at one time, but each as it was issued. But the rock of Girnar, for instance, contains, we may suppose, all the edicts of the three years, collected, as it were, into a volume. The contents of the fourteenth imply that it is the close of a series; and state that the edicts have been issued in various forms, abridged, medium, and full. Everything tends to confirm the opinion that we have them here put together *in the order in which they were issued*.

Besides the fourteen, which these five rocks contain, two other edicts are found separately at two of the same five places, Dhauli and Jangada. They differ considerably in tone and style from the fourteen, being addressed to the authorities of particular districts. Two more have been found on rocks at Rupnâth, and at Sahasaram, both on the Kaimur Hills. These belong to the earlier periods—one of them is probably the earliest of all.

As time went on, it seems to have struck the king that instead of looking out natural rocks, which, of course, could not always be found in places suitable to his purpose, he might erect stone pillars of his own, and carve his proclamations on them. At Allahabad, at Dehli, at Rupnath, and at Sahasaram, pillars have been found which contain among them eight edicts, all of which are of the king's later years.

Finally, the latest probably (though carved on a rock and undated), and from its explicitly Buddhist language the most important to us of all, was

found at Bairat or Bhabra, and is now, as has been said, in the Museum at Calcutta.

Now in the thirteenth of the Rock Edicts—of which copies occur only at Girnar, Khalsi, and Kapur-di-giri—occurs that mention of the Greek kings on which so much hangs. The text is not perfectly decipherable, but enough for the purpose is certain. It is read thus: 'It is in the conquest of religion that the king dear to the gods takes pleasure, both in his own empire and in all the frontiers, over an area of many hundreds of yojanas. Among these are Antiochus (Am̐tiyogo or Am̐tiyoko), the king of the Yavanas; and on the north of this Antiochus four kings, Ptolemy (Turámaye Turamáyo or Tulamaye), Antigonus (Am̐tekena Antakána or Am̐tikini), Magas (Maka Magá or Máká), Alexander (Alikasandale or Alikasudaro); on the south the Codas, the Pándyaś, as far as Tambapanni (Ceylon),' etc.

Antiochus is mentioned also in the Second Edict.

We must turn to Greek history for a moment. The reader will remember that Alexander the Great invaded India in the years 329-326, and returned to Babylon only to die—in 323—leaving his conquests to be quarrelled over by his generals. In the division which ensued, the Indian province fell to Seleucus Nicator. This prince first opposed and then supported the rising power of Sandracottus, between whose dynasty and the Greek rulers of the Bactrian kingdom and of the regions further west, a close alliance appears to have continued. The names

Antiochus, Ptolemy, Antigonus, Magas, were all somewhat common among the successors and descendants of the Macedonian generals; but there was but one period, as might be expected, and that a short one, in which four kings of these four names were reigning at the same time. This was from the year 260 to 258. Then the five names were borne by, Antiochus II. of Syria, Ptolemy Philadelphus, Antigonus Gonatas of Macedonia, Magas of Cyrene, and Alexander of Epirus. Unless, therefore, Piyadasi was misinformed (and it is possible one might have recently died without his knowing it), the thirteenth edict must have been issued between 260 and 258 B.C. Since this series of edicts belongs to the period between the eleventh and the fourteenth year from the king's solemn anointing or consecration, that event must have been about 270 B.C. (These dates do not differ by more than two or three years from those which are obtained, a reasonable correction being admitted, from the Sinhalese Great History.) The latest dated edict belongs to the king's twenty-eighth year.

For the years, therefore, from 260 to 230, the evidence of the Asoka inscriptions is good; and we come at last to the question, 'What picture of Buddhism do we find here?'

It will clear the ground if I say first what we do not find. We do not find expressions, as the Three Pitakas or Vinaya or Sutta, which are the titles of the present collection of books. We find no allusions to the Four Truths, or to the Twelve Causes, to

Karma, or to Nirvana; the technical terms under which virtues and vices are grouped in the books are never, or scarcely ever, found here; we meet with no 'agati,' or 'nivaranañ,' no 'silañ, samádhi, paññá.'¹

If the series stopped short of the Bairat inscription, we should have to add that there would not be—and there is not in any of the edicts of the king's earlier years—any mention of Buddha, or 'bhikkhu,' or of any treatises of religion.² We should have said without reserve, the Buddhism of Asoka is not the Buddhism of the Pitakas.

Not that there is in the earliest edicts no system, nothing technical. On the contrary, there are two at least, classes of officials (*rajjuká* and '*dhammama-hámátá*') who play in the king's system an important part, but are unknown to the books. There are institutions, especially that of a quinquennial assembly, of which the Pitakas say nothing.

Only in the last, the Bairat inscription, the king definitely addresses the Community of Magadha; professes his attachment to the Buddha, the Law, and the Community; speaks of the 'utterances of the Buddha' (*Bhagavatá Budhena bhásitañ*) as all good; and commends certain treatises, one of which is termed a Sutta, especially to be studied by his sub-

¹ If M. Sémart is right in finding 'ásava' in the 'ásinave' of the second and third Pillar Edicts, it is an important exception; but the three instances of 'ásinava' given in the Third Edict are not the three 'ásavas' of the books.

² The word 'sañgha,' the title of the Community, in the Edict of *Sahasarám*, must still be considered doubtful. The Community is (probably) represented in another early edict of a different and less technical name, 'parisa' (K. iii. 7 of Sémart).

jects. Of these treatises, not one bears exactly any name which is now in the Pitaka books; but the titles of particular books and passages have always varied, and there are texts to which the names used by Asoka may possibly refer—one in particular, the 'Instruction of Rahula,' is so identified.

There are few more interesting compositions in existence than these short proclamations. They reveal the personality of the writer; who takes his vast dominions, and—as it has turned out—the men of twenty centuries to come, into his confidence. He tells us the changes in his own attitude towards religion, and laments his former errors and want of zeal. There is egotism enough, but it is as much thankfulness as boasting.

Assuming, and it is a safe assumption, that the fourteen Rock Edicts were promulgated in the order in which we read them, and followed after a long interval by the Pillar Edicts, we find a well-marked progress in the king's ideas. This progress advances along Buddhist lines. The first point on which his conscience, to use modern language, seems to have been awakened, was that of 'taking life.' He laments the vast destruction of life—hundreds of thousands of animals a day—which used to take place for the royal table; and specifies with the utmost naïveté those which it is still usual to kill, two peacocks and one deer, but *the deer not always*, and promises that in future not even these shall be killed. Later on, he mentions with deep regret the multitudes of

men who had suffered in his wars, especially in a particular conquest; and among them he feels particularly for the religious ascetics, who, if not killed, have been distressed. And from his first conversion the king's kindness has led him not only not to kill, but to provide medicines both for men and for animals; and to have such trees planted, both in his own and in neighbouring countries, as are useful for medical purposes.

The great duty of alms-giving is also among the earliest insisted on, and comes out into more and more prominence,—alms-giving, especially to ascetics, to Brahmans and 'Samanas' (the two titles which latterly distinguished the Brahman and the Buddhist monk, but were at first used alike for any religious ascetic).

The other characteristic Buddhist virtues, pity, purity, truthfulness, and kindness in speech, are prominently insisted on, the emphasis laid on gentle speech being peculiarly in accord with Buddhist teaching as we read it in the sacred books.

In his admirable lessons on respect for parents, kindness towards slaves, and care for the religious interests of condemned criminals; and on the duty and advantage, not merely of tolerance, but of mutual respect, between differing religious sects, the royal teacher rises perhaps to a higher level than the Pitakas attain.

And he seldom speaks of alms without urging that the inner essence of conduct, kindness and

Goodness, is worth more than alms; and that the best of all gifts is the gift of the true doctrine, the promotion of religion in those whom one would benefit.¹

His one desire is for the good of his people, every one of whom he looks on as a son; that they may be as happy here as possible, and enjoy heaven hereafter. Good deeds ensure heaven; they not only bring the high satisfaction here of consciousness of virtue, but much more, they secure an infinite crop of merit. The infinite crop of merit ensuring heaven is the often-repeated expression for the *summum bonum*. There is nothing here of 'nirvana,' but it is a perfectly just representation of one side of the earliest Buddhist teaching. Once more, the king's watchword is 'effort.' This word he repeats over and over again. He acknowledges the difficulty of a consistent religious life, but urges that it is worth the effort. He calls on his ministers and officials to do their utmost; it is only by exertion that these high fruits can be obtained. Men must strive and never give up. The one fatal obstacle to moral improvement is idleness and want of perseverance.²

All this, as it is read in the original, is even more strikingly Buddhist than it sounds in the English; for although most of the technical terms of the Pitakas are conspicuous by their absence, there is an agreement in phrase, and a use of favourite

¹ See *ante*, Chap. xi. p. 179.

² The absence of the word 'pamádo' is the more remarkable.

turns of expression, which keeps us very near to the language of the books. It is as clearly in sympathy with them as it is certainly not quoted from them. In short, the king's mind, if he was himself the author of these works, was becoming more and more imbued with a Buddhist spirit.

But meanwhile there is a whole region outside the limits and characteristics of Buddhism—a system of overseers of religion, higher and lower functionaries, appointed over provinces and districts, in the city and in the palace, to teach all classes, the king's wives and his sons in particular ;—a system which seems to have been intended to be independent of the distinctions of creed or religion (as is, in fact, expressly stated in the eighth Pillar Edict), and to have aimed at promoting what the king continually calls that *essence* of religion which all sects¹ have in common. To promote good-will and justice, relieve the oppressed, distribute the royal bounties, these were the liberal aims with which this organisation, in which Piyadasi justly took delight and pride, was instituted. He boasts that he has sent his emissaries all over the world, into foreign countries as well as his own dominions ; but it was to teach, not Buddhism nor any particular creed, but the *essential sound core* of personal goodness.

In this sketch we have been brought in contact

¹ The use of the word *pāsāṇḍa* for any sect or form of religion entirely without disparagement marks a point somewhat earlier than that of the fully formulated Buddhism. In the latter it implies 'heretical.'

with a well-marked personality ; that of a man of the widest possible aims and the widest possible tolerance, yet one whose own mind has received its religious influences in a Buddhist form, from Buddhist sources. Of one thing only he is intolerant or somewhat contemptuous, of outward observances. He means probably Brahmanical ceremonies, for he alludes to such rites as were commonly practised in the several occasions of domestic life. They are of uncertain value at the best ; in fact, virtually useless. And in one place—the only place where he definitely disparages any form of religion—he says he has made those that used to be the gods of India to be its gods no longer. M. S  nart thinks he means the Brahmins.

So far I have left out of sight the one edict, that of Bairat or Bhabra already alluded to, which is addressed directly to the Community of Magadh  . In this the king appears very definitely as a disciple of the Buddha and a humble supporter of the Community.

The edict is thus translated by M. S  nart :

King Piyadasi salutes the Magadhan clergy¹ and wishes them prosperity and good health. You know, my lords, the extent of my respect and my zeal towards the Buddha, the Law, and the Clergy.¹ All that has been said by the blessed Buddha, it is all well said : and in so far as I can order anything, my lords, of my own will, I wish that this religious Law may be of long

¹ Or, as I should render it, 'Community.'

duration. Here are, for instance, my lords, some religious pieces : the *Vinayasamukasa* (Teaching of discipline) ; the *Ariyavasas* (supernatural powers (?) of the Aryas) ; the *Anāgatabhayas* (dangers to come) ; the *Munigāthās* (the stanzas relating to the Muni or solitary religious) ; the *Upatisāpasina* (the questions of Upatishya) ; the *Moneyasūta* (the sutra on Perfection) ; and the sermon to Rāhula uttered by the blessed Buddha, and beginning with falsehood. These religious pieces I desire the numerous confraternities of bhikkhus and bhikkhunis¹ to hear frequently and to meditate upon ; likewise the lay devotees of both sexes. It is for this, my lords, that I have this engraven, that my will may be known.'

The peculiar tone of this one proclamation may be explained in either of two ways, or in both. It may be that the king used at the same time one tone towards the leaders of the religion to which he was personally attached, and another tone when he spoke as emperor to his subjects of every creed ; one tone to the 'Community' of a small district which was entirely Buddhist, and another to the heterogeneous populations of a continent. The frame of mind supposed in this seems somewhat modern ; but in a man of the singular greatness and genius of Asoka, it need not be held incredible. Or, on the other hand, it may be that this Bairat inscription belongs to the latest years of his reign ; was issued on occasion of some particular event which had occurred in the

¹ i.e. monks and nuns.

Magadha community; and expressed a new and more definite enthusiasm on the king's part, consequent on a more definite knowledge. I think the latter explanation is the main one, but that the former is also true, and comes in to reinforce it.

The Sinhalese Chronicles, whose account of Asoka is found in the main so true, tell us that an assembly of the Community was held in Magadha in his reign, at which the canon of the sacred books was finally established. What we have been reading confirms this. Whether it was the whole canon that was then revised or not, everything conspires to convince us that about this time the Buddhist literature attained, or began to attain, a definite structure which it had not before. Asoka's general attitude in religious matters was certainly not as definitely or exclusively Buddhist as the Buddhist chronicles, not unnaturally, claim it to have been; nor does he display acquaintance with a Buddhism so fully formed as the chronicles would have it that it was; yet when we do find him on strictly Buddhist ground, in his own city and among his own monks, he uses very much the language which we should expect him to have used if Moggaliputta had just been holding the council in Patna. 'All that the Buddha has said is well said.'

Is it not possible, or highly probable, that some of his high officers of religion were leaders of the Buddhist Community, and Moggaliputta Tissa the chief of these; that among the missionaries of religion whom he boasts of having sent abroad, though all were

not Buddhist monks, some were; and that Mahinda, the missionary of Ceylon, was one of these ?¹

In spite of such a reconciliation, as I have shown can fairly be made between the Buddhism of Asoka and that of the Pitakas, the difficulty still will recur, that they are after all two different things. Some will still be tempted to say, as M. Sénart in fact says, that in Asoka's day there existed only a simpler system, the metaphysical Buddhism of the books being altogether of later date. But this will introduce greater difficulties.

We can pretty easily part company with the traditions which tell us that the system contained in the Pitakas was enunciated in its fulness by Gotama, or even, if need be, with that which says that these books were complete at the Council of Vesáli in 381 B.C.; but we cannot shake ourselves clear of the evidence that the contents and even the words of the Pitakas were known about Asoka's time.

The book called the 550 Jatakas, or, Stories of the Buddha's Previous Lives, is not considered one of the canonical books, but a commentary on one of them. The canonical book called 'Jataka' contains only certain stanzas, which for the moment I may call the 'morals' of the Jataka fables. It was, of course, compiled from those fables, and after them, and is only a witness on the point that the fables were

¹ The end of the Edicts of Sahasarám and Rupnáth, as now interpreted by M. Sénart, explicitly commemorates the mission of 256 such persons, and gives instructions for their conduct. But the interpretation is still *sub judice*.

early pressed into the service of Buddhism. We cannot infer from the Buddhist use of a Jataka story, that the Jataka book had been compiled; but we can infer, from great prominence being given in Buddhist quarters to stories which are in the Jataka book, that the materials of that book were collecting in Buddhist hands. Now among the carvings which adorn the stone rails around the great relic shrine of Bharhut (attributed to B.C. 240-210) are carved numerous illustrations of the Jataka stories; some of them are distinctly recognisable as the stories which we now find in the collection; some have the titles written upon them which they still bear.

If these stood alone, there would not be more than a moderate probability that they were chosen for that position because they held a place in the sacred literature; but this probability is greatly increased by their juxtaposition with what I have next to mention. Another scene on the same railings represents an event in the traditional history of the Buddha (see p. 61), the donation by the rich layman Anáthapindika of the park called Jetavana, to be a dwelling-place for Gotama and his train. The ground is covered, in accordance with the story, with coins; for it had been bought by the donor for as many gold 'kahápanas' as would cover it. And on the face of the tablet is carved the inscription, in almost the very words of the *Maha Vagga*: 'Anathapindika gives the Jetavana, having bought it for a layer of millions (of money).'

The relic-dome which these rails surround, and the railings themselves, are thought by General Cunningham to date from the latter part of the third century B.C., not more than twenty years after Asoka's later edicts. It is possible, but is not the opinion. I believe, of the learned, that the carvings are later than the dome.

But if these carvings are of the date assigned, the Buddhism of the books, whatever be said of the books themselves, must have been in full force. Beside these which I have mentioned, there are other scenes in the same series, representing events not contained in our Pitakas, but belonging to the later embellishment of them,—such as the descent of Gotama as a white elephant into his mother's body, and his journey to the Tusita heaven to preach to her. From these we should infer that the Buddhism, not of the edicts, but of the Pitakas, had been long established.

And there is another piece of evidence,—to my mind the most interesting, as it is certainly the most irrefragable, of all,—which establishes completely the claim of these Ceylon chroniclers, who tell us that *their* Buddhism was in full force in Asoka's day and was promoted by him, to be true witnesses about that period. We have already seen that, in the main points of their statement about Asoka—his conversion, his zeal, his missionary efforts—the Ceylon chroniclers are right. The minuteness of their knowledge of what Asoka did, in strictly Buddhist matters, is also indisputably proved. The king, says the chronicle,

sent out missionaries not to Ceylon only, but to many countries. Amongst them, 'he sent the elder, Majjhima, to the district of Himavanta.' Who would not have supposed that this was a detail for which the chronicler might have drawn on his imagination? But in the inmost recesses of the great relic-dome at Sanchi, a stone box was found by General Cunningham, on which was inscribed in 'Asoka' letters: '(relics) of Majjhima, teacher of the Himavat.' It is the nature of a relic-dome or 'dagaba' to be built solid over the relics which it encloses; not to be left open for them to be put in afterwards. If this is an unbroken rule, as I believe it is, the Mahavansa preserves the record of a minute fact, which was monumentally recorded at the date of the dagaba; *i.e.* according to General Cunningham, about 200 B.C., close about the very time when Majjhima, according to the Mahavansa, must have died. In short, we have contemporary evidence of the fact which the Mahavansa records.

In view of these things it seems impossible to doubt that the Sinhalese monks, from whose archives the Mahavansa was compiled, had preserved a true tradition about the character which belonged, in Asoka's days, to that stock of Buddhism which was brought over, in his days, to them.

It remains strange that the edicts of the father differ so widely from the text-books of the son, but there is hardly better ground for setting aside the one than for disputing the other.

At this point the writer may be forgiven for pausing and inviting his reader to reflect with him on the unique position occupied, in the history of human thought, by the imperial moralist. His was an enthusiasm such as was never reached by any Antonines. In him Buddhism inspired perhaps the greatest effort, in scale at any rate, on behalf of good, that was ever made by a man, outside of Christianity. The rules and the books are insignificant in his presence.

Two hundred years at least had elapsed since the death of the founder, to whom the organisation of moral effort was attributed. A vast change had passed, since his day, over the face—the political aspect at least—of India. The touch of a strange new civilisation—the civilisation of their distant Aryan brethren of Europe—had been felt by the Aryans of the Ganges. Aided by the Greek invader, a single monarchy had asserted itself, and claimed all India for its own, and had so far succeeded as to give vividness to a new conception—that of a universal monarch. A great man had arisen, representative of that dynasty, who had assimilated much of the new civilisation and felt its stimulating influence. In his person the idea of the world-monarch was embodied. He was a man of vast ambitions and vast designs. And on this man, Piyadasi Asoka, at first a despot as careless as others of the means he used, the teaching of the ascetic community laid its spell. He became much more than its patron: he was

its apostle. As his reign went on he was more and more imbued with its spirit; the desire to serve it and extend it moulded his magnificent enterprise. He was not merely the Constantine of Buddhism; he was an Alexander with Buddhism for his Hellas; an unselfish Napoleon, with 'mettam' in the place of 'gloire.' The world was his that he might protect all lives in it; might teach loving-kindness throughout it; might establish in every part of it the Community of the disciples of the Buddha.

Compared with the solid reality of Asoka, the records which are preserved of the Buddha himself are but a shadowy tradition. And as the great King's history becomes better known, men will be tempted to speculate whether Buddhism owes more to Gotama than to Moggali;¹ to ask how far what is definite in the history of Bimbisāra's days is a reflection thrown back on the mist of the past from the greater epoch of Asoka.

*
¹ The leader of the Community in Asoka's time.

CHAPTER XXI

CRITICAL HISTORY OF THE CANONICAL LITERATURE

THAT the contents of the Pitakas are not all of the date traditionally attributed to them, and—what is a different point—that they are not all of one date, will probably be admitted by every student, and, indeed, by every intelligent Buddhist. But it may be worth while to state clearly the proofs on which such a conclusion rests. The statement will probably show that the extent to which a variety of date must be admitted is very large indeed.

1. To take first what results from a general perusal of the canonical books. The Commentaries themselves admit, with regard to certain specified portions, that they were later additions ; for instance, the Commentary on the *Thérágátha* is quoted by Professor Morris as saying that parts of that book were first uttered at the Council of Patna.¹ The *Dipavansa* has been generally understood as saying² that the *Kathávattu* of the *Abhidhamma Pitaka* was first uttered by the *Moggaliputta* at the same council ; and although Pro-

¹ Professor Morris on *Thérágátha*, P.T.S., p. xi.

² *Dip.* vii. 55. The *Subha S.* was uttered by Ananda after the decease of the Buddha. See *Dig. Nik.* p. 204 ; *Samanta Pásád.* p. 286.

Professor Childers considered this interpretation to be a blunder, both Professor Oldenberg and the chief modern Sinhalese scholars uphold it; and there is nothing in itself improbable in the opinion that this is what the chronicler meant.

That many of the books were composed, not in the infancy of Buddhism, but when it had been a definite religion long enough for divisions and sects to have arisen, is abundantly evident. The 'degeneracy' of monks from the old standard is constantly deplored,—*e.g.* Sāmyut. bk. xvi. ch. xii. p. 224. Not only do the two last books of the Culla Vagga purport to contain the record of the Council of Vesali—said to have been held a hundred years after the decease of the Buddha to settle such disputes—but earlier parts of the Vinaya (see especially Maha Vagga, x.) were evidently written with a view to providing, or recording, a method of settling disputes, which is the very method resorted to in the Vesali case. Instructions are there represented as having been given by Gotama to each class—monks, nuns, lay devotees, etc.—how to behave in order to be sure of adhering to the orthodox party. In fact it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that this part of the Maha Vagga was written at the same time with and in closest reference to the later chapters of the Culla Vagga. The tenth book of the Maha Vagga is occupied with the record of a division in the Community, in which certain monks are guilty. The conduct prescribed is just that pursued by the orthodox in the Vesali

case—eighteen points (Vatthuni) are mentioned. At any rate, all these were written when there was a systematic method recognised of dealing with formulated heresies.

These, however, might possibly have been regarded as exceptional cases of later additions, were it not that references to disputes, heresies, and sects are found in almost every part of the Pitakas,—references less particular, but not less conclusive, for our purpose. We read of hostile monks as common, or likely to be common; of secessions to rival sects,¹ and of schisms. Whether 'nánásamvāsaká,' literally 'living together in different groups,' should be translated by so strong a word as Professor Rhys Davids, 'of another communion,' I venture to doubt. But the allusions to sects and divisions are to be found everywhere, and not least in those books (as *Maha Vagga*) which have on other grounds the best claims to be thought old.

The concise list of rules called the *Pátimokkha*, and still used by the monks in their periodical chapters, is found imbedded (in the book called *Vibhanga*) among a number of more detailed rules, and is there explained, word for word, by a glossary. Now, if the view of Professors Rhys Davids and Oldenberg be accepted—and it is difficult to doubt it—that the *Patimokkha*, with its word-for-word glossary, is the original nucleus of the *Vibhanga*, and that around it in course of time the detailed illustrations grew up (the *Mátikápadáni*),—

¹ *Maha Vagga*, i. 32. 1; *ib.* viii. 30. 4.

hen it follows that all this had taken place, and the history of it had been forgotten, and the original nucleus had been completely merged in the accretions, before the eleventh book of the Culla Vagga was composed; for in that chapter which purports to narrate how the sacred books were recited at the Council of Vesali, the recitation is represented as following not the older Patimokkha but the full Vibhanga.

References are not infrequent in one part of the Pitaka to the contents of another part: *e.g.* in the Kutadanta Sutta, it is said, 'here are to be embodied the contents of the Samannaphala Sutta;' a particular section of the Sutta Nipāta (Atthakatha) is referred to by name in Maha Vagga, v. 13. In Culla Vagga, i. 32, 2, we find enumerated the various similes which the Buddha has used for 'lust.' The stories of the Cariyā Pitaka even take for granted the Jataka commentary.¹ Sometimes one text expressly revokes another, as Maha Vagga, vi. 32, in reference to Maha Vagga, vi. 17, etc.

The books are represented as having become objects of study and research. Some Suttas, we read, are difficult and liable to be shirked by idle monks.² There is danger that a famous Sutta should be altogether lost, for want of some one to learn it by heart from those in whose memory it still survives.³ A variety of alternative names is given—said to have been given by the Buddha, in answer to Ananda who

¹ See Dr. Morris's Pref. to C. P. ² Sanyut. xx. 7. ³ Maha Vagga, iii. 5. 9.

asks its name—to one Sutta.¹ A certain verse is quoted and said to be old, but to be misunderstood by heretics.²

The passage above referred to (Sanyut. xx. 7) calls the old Suttas Tathāgathabhāsita, genuine utterances of Buddha, as distinguished from later additions. Angut. iv. 23 reviews all Gotama's speeches as true.

Besides the glossary on the Patimokkha in the Vibhanga, there are other comments inserted in the text in many places. A geographical note is inserted in the text in Maha Vagga, v. 13. 12, and a note on a name in Maha Vagga, viii. 1. 4. Search into Suttas to correct false opinions is prescribed in Angut. iv. 180, and the duty of learning and interpreting Suttas in Angut. 160, and not only learning but reading in Angut. iv. 97.

Further, the sum-total of the sayings of Buddha having been classified under nine heads—a process which one would not expect to find taking place until some time had elapsed—the nine kinds of text are many times enumerated,³ while the less elaborate division—Dhamma, Vinaya, Matika—occurs constantly.⁴ The ever-recurring phrase 'sattham savyanjanam' is usually rendered 'with text and comment,' and in any case implies a critical attitude towards the text, but it may have been in use in regard to Brahmanical texts, as it has not, like those above mentioned, any exclusive Buddhist application.

¹ Brahmaj. Sutta; Dig. Nik. i.

² Maj. Nik. 75; and see p. 75.

³ Maj. Nik. 22 (Alagadda Sutta) and Angut. iv. 6. 102. 186.

⁴ Maha Vagga, x. 1—Maj. Nik. 33.

Of these indications of later strata of text one or another occurs in almost every part of the collection. One begins by saying to one's-self of one book and another, 'this is evidently late,' but one soon finds one's-self asking 'what is there left that can be old?'

An entirely distinct class of notes of age is found in the wide differences of grammatical form of diction and of metrical structure. Professor Fausböll and others have pointed out what are the older terminations; but I have not seen it shown in regard to any book that it is characterised by the presence of the older forms alone, or by their complete absence. A verse or a formula may be pronounced older or more recent on this ground; but I question whether the test can be successfully applied to any whole book or section of a book.

Among metres certain forms are, as I think I can show, generally associated with the older grammatical forms, and with the apparently older forms of narrative or dogma. The passages in which these metres are found may, perhaps, be pronounced to be the oldest portions; but I am not prepared to advance this as a matured conclusion.

2. One very important Sutta, to which frequent reference has been made, that which records the last doings and sayings of the Buddha and his final decease, the *Maha Parinibbana Sutta* (translated in the *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. xi.), bears indications not only of a late date, but, as I think, of a particular date, that of the reign of Asoka. The grounds of this conviction I must try fully to explain.

The first point to be mentioned, interesting as it is¹ is not one on which I found much. The Sutta contains a supposed prophecy of Gotama's, to the effect that Patali, then an insignificant district or village (Pataligama), should become a great and important city (Pataliputta or Patna). To Buddhists, who believe in the Buddha's power to foretell the future, no argument can be founded on this. But all who are not Buddhists, and many who are, will agree that the passage was written after the city had become important; and that the only question is, At what time did this take place? There is a tradition of doubtful value,¹ that it became the royal residence somewhat before 381 B.C.; and the Sinhalese Chronicle tells us that about that date Asoka, the son of Susanāga, reigned there.² Another tradition preserved by the Chinese pilgrim, Hiouen Thsang, says that it was the great Asoka who 'quitted Rajagaha, and fixed his court at Pataliputta.'³ However, while there remains this uncertainty, I can not absolutely claim the argument from this prophecy in support of any date later than 381 B.C. I will not, however, conceal my conviction that the earlier Asoka is a fictitious person; and that

¹ See Professor Rhys Davids' Introduction to the *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. xi. p. xvi.

² *Dīpavansa*, v. 25. But this is absent from *Samanta Pāsād* (Old, p. 294-5), which emphasises, as *Dīpavansa* does elsewhere, Dhammasoka's reigning at Pátali-putta.

³ Quoted by Oldenberg, Introduction to *Vinaya*, p. 33. This cannot be true, as it is certain from the Greek historians that Candagutta was established at Palibothra.

he true founder of the greatness of the city was Asoka Piyadasi.

The Sutta opens by representing the king of Magadha as proposing to wage war against the Vajjians, and the Buddha as inquiring at great length into the degree of harmony which prevailed among the Vajjians, and saying that on their unity their prosperity depended. Now it was the Vajjians whose schism, according to the Culla Vagga, gave rise to the proceedings called the Council of Vesali.

It contains an account of the character of a Cakkavatti king or universal monarch, and of the way of burying one with ceremonies like those for a Buddha. Now Asoka Piyadasi was, as far as we know, the first, and certainly the first for several centuries, who answered to the description of a universal monarch. In him was embodied the Cakkavatti idea. In the days of the supposed Kalasoka, before the Greeks had erected the dynasty of Candagutta, the idea could hardly have been framed.

The Sutta orders the erection of dagabas or relic-shrines, a thing of which we hear nothing in the early books. This Asoka did : from his time, and from the succeeding century, date the majority of the great *dagabas* of India and of Ceylon. But what is particularly significant, it is stated in the Sutta that by the advice of Dona (see p. 85) these *dagabas* were to be erected, not in certain tribal provinces only, but in a great variety of places, so that the

religion might be propagated over all the world. This is utterly out of place in 381 B.C., but accords exactly with the proceedings of Piyadasi.

The Sutta says that the builders of Pataliputta named one of the gates Gotama's gate, and one of the ferries Gotama's ferry. Who is most likely to have given these names? Surely the great patron of Buddhism, the king who was converted to it—from which we may probably infer that his immediate predecessors were not Buddhists—and who turned all his energies to establish and glorify the religion?

From these considerations, I conclude that the Parinibbana Sutta was compiled at a time which later tradition claimed as the time of Kalasoka, and of the Vesali proceedings, but which there is very great reason to suspect was the time of Asoka Piyadasi.

If there is reason, on other grounds, to suspect Kalasoka of being fictitious, the probability of what I suggest is greatly increased.

But the Parinibbana Sutta does not stand alone. It is very closely allied to the Saṃyutta¹ and Anguttara² Nikayas, and to some of the more systematic Suttas of the other Nikayas. A very large part of the Pitakas must be brought down, as regards final compilation, to the date which is assigned to the Parinibbana Sutta.³

¹ Cf. Sanyut. xxi. 2, on wishing the Buddha to remain; *ib.* xx. 8, on the effeminacy of the Lichavis, etc.; xvi. 7, when in a comment on the common verse Candā dosā, etc., the words are used, 'hāni yeva patikankhā no vuddhi.'

² Angut. iv. 23; *ib.* 130 (Cakkavatt), 158, 183, 187, etc.

³ e.g. Samaññ. Sutta, when the king is represented as having done exactly as Piyadasi did, tried other teachers, killed his brothers, etc.

And we have seen that tradition, according at least to Ceylon interpretation, does hint at some part at any rate of the latest Pitaka dating from Asoka's time.

The next step in the argument, which I borrow in the main from Professor Oldenberg, proves that the whole Abhidhamma Pitaka, as a collection, was later than Kalasoka and Vesali.

The Buddhist canonical books are grouped in three collections or Pitakas. The Collection of the Rule, or Vinaya Pitaka, the collection of Suttas, or Sutta Pitaka, and a third called Abhidhamma Pitaka. The three together are called the Tipitaka.

Now the word Tipitaka is not found in the Vinaya, nor, I believe, as far as is known, in either of the other collections. A ninefold classification, purporting to be exhaustive, of all the Buddha's teachings, does often occur. The Vinaya contains a record of two councils in which, especially in the first, the total and complete canon is said to have been defined; but neither here does the word Tipitaka, or even Pitaka itself, occur. It seems certain, therefore, that the arrangement in three Pitakas was a late arrangement.

A twofold grouping of the literature was inevitable from the first. The religious literature of every sect must have been more or less definitely divided into the two heads of rules and sermons; into rules of discipline, and discourses on good and evil, and the way of escape. It was hardly possible that the

teachings of Gotama should be collected at all without being distinguished into what would correspond substantially to a Vinaya Pitaka and a Sutta Pitaka. But there is no such natural place for a third, an Abhidhamma. This is of the nature of an addition. Its contents do not differ much from those of the Sutta Pitaka. The Vinaya and the Suttas must have existed before the Abhidhamma.

And there is abundant evidence that this was the case; abundant traces in the canonical books of a time when there were but two divisions of the literature. The one was always called Vinaya; but the other is called, within the sacred books themselves, not Sutta Pitaka, but Dhamma or Doctrine. The two words, Vinaya and Dhamma, or in one word, Dhammavinaya, occur very frequently. They mean sometimes doctrine and discipline, as when it is said, at the admission of a convert, 'one who was before a professor of another creed desires admission into this doctrine and discipline.' At other times they mean the books of doctrine and the books of discipline, as when it is recorded in the Culla Vagga that at the first council Upāli recited Vinaya, and Ananda recited Dhamma. That the Dhamma there said to have been recited was the collection of books now called the Sutta Pitaka is certain; for the five sections which form that Pitaka are expressly referred to, and the first Sutta of each is specified by name. And these two, Vinaya and Dhamma, it is stated, were the whole. At the time, there-

fore, when the last chapters of the Culla Vagga were written, there was a Vinaya Collection and a Sutta Collection, but there was not an Abhidhamma.¹ There were not three Pitakas; the literature, as we now have it, was not complete. (At the same time, it must be admitted that the whole completed canon was called Dhamma and Vinaya: *e.g.* in Samantapāsādikā, we constantly find this expression side by side with Tipitakaṃ. See especially in the account of the Third Council, Samant. p. 312 *ad fin.*)

What date was this at which the Abhidhamma had not been added? It was certainly after what is called the Council of Vesali, B.C. 381: for it contains the record of that event.² That is the earliest possible date, but it is by no means the latest possible.

And when the statement of the books, that all was completed at the First Council, or at any rate at Vesali, is thus shown to be erroneous, we have no reason remaining for assigning to the completion any earlier date than on other grounds seems probable.

But to this it may be replied: Although the third Pitaka was added later, and although the covers of the Sutta Pitaka may for a long time have stood open to admit new compositions and compilations, or spoils

¹ The word 'Abhidhamma' occurs in the Vinaya and Suttas, but not as the name of a book or books.

² In the account of the Vesālī proceedings there is no mention of a revision of the whole (see below, p. 297), but the phrases Dhamma and Vinaya occur frequently, Abhidhamma never; nor in the learning ascribed to Revata in Chap. x.

adapted to Buddhist use from other literatures, yet we are bound to believe that the main body of the canon was completed, as tradition says all was, before the Council of Vesali.

Tradition tells us, I answer, with even greater minuteness and circumstantiality, that it was all completed at the Council of Rajagaha. It proves too much.

And tradition about Vesali is not all on one side ; the oldest, if I mistake not, looks the other way.

At this point then I must invite the reader's attention to the subject of the so-called Three Councils ; and I will begin by stating the conclusion to which I have come. I have arrived at it with reluctance, because in doing so I have had to part company, not only with Sinhalese tradition, but to some extent with Dr. Oldenberg. He holds that the Vesali proceedings did take place about 381 B.C., and that when they took place the Vinaya Pitaka at least was substantially complete. I cannot agree either that we know the date of these proceedings, or that we can infer from the record of them anything about the state of the literature at that date. If I am right in this latter position, the date matters little.

My conclusion is, that whatever Council was held in Asoka's time, it was the first Council of which we have any information ; that the 'Council of Rajagaha' is entirely fictitious, and that the proceedings at Vesali were not a council.

We have two sources of information about the

earlier councils ; first, the two last chapters of the Culla Vagga, which is the last section of the Vinaya Pitaka ; and secondly, the Sinhalese tradition, as embodied in the Dipavansa and in Buddhaghosha's historical introduction to the commentary on the Vinaya. The well-known story of the three councils is derived from the latter source alone.

The first is recorded, though not under the title of a council (see below), not only in the Sinhalese tradition but in the Vinaya Pitaka itself, in the eleventh chapter of the Culla Vagga. It is there narrated with the utmost circumstantiality : the Sinhalese story is taken thence.

The reader will remember, perhaps, that at the time of the Buddha's final decease there was one disloyal voice raised, that of Subhadda, who said : ' We are well rid of him—now we can do as we like.' It was to meet this disloyal suggestion, says the eleventh chapter, that five hundred of the most eminent of his monks assembled at Rajagaha, with much pomp and circumstance, under the presidency of Kassapa, and the entire Vinaya was chanted through by Upali, and the Dhamma or Sutta Pitaka in like manner by Ananda. It was retained in memory with absolute exactness by the five hundred, and was never afterwards added to or altered, except by the addition of a few headings or divisions of sections.

The Sinhalese Dipavansa, our earliest authority after the canonical books, repeats this story briefly but without alteration. Buddhaghosha, however, perhaps

to correct what appeared to be an omission, adds, that¹ in this place under the head of 'Khuddakanikāyo' is included *all the rest of the words of the Buddha*.¹ Elsewhere it includes only all the rest of the Sutta Pitaka. But there is not the slightest reason to think that the Ceylon tradition, or the similar account current among the Northern Buddhists, is independent of the account in the Culla Vagga. Over that account there hangs a grave suspicion. There are ten books of the Maha Vagga, twelve of the Culla Vagga. The last two are peculiar in character and contents. One of these relates the Council of Rajagaha, the other that of Vesali. The Council of Rajagaha, which is thus held to have settled the Buddhist canon, is never alluded to in any other part of these books. In those books there are many references to Buddha's words, to doubts about them, to Suttas being disused and forgotten, and so on; but not one reference, so far as is known, to the Council of Rajagaha. Further, the Parinibbana Sutta, which mentions what took place after the Buddha's death, and mentions that remark of Subhaddha, which is said to have suggested the council, makes no allusion to any council. Clearly, as Dr. Oldenberg says, 'the authors of the Parinibbana Sutta knew nothing of the First Council.'

That the council took place under the circumstances described is of course incredible, but from what has been said the reader will see, not only that it was not a fact, but that the tradition of it was a late tradition.

¹ Smanta-Pāsādikā. Introduction, Oldenberg, p. 291.

The Second Council, according to the *Dipavansa*, took place at Vesali, exactly a hundred years after the Buddha's death. Certain Vajjian monks had promulgated heretical notions on ten extremely trifling points; points which bear, I think, the appearance of having been especially selected as trifling, to show how minute was the orthodoxy which they disturbed. Twelve thousand Vajjians, says the *Dipavansa*, assembled, and proclaimed at Vesali these ten points. To subdue these, twelve hundred thousand orthodox monks assembled. They crushed the heretics, and appointed seven hundred of their own number to hold a council. This was the second council. Meanwhile, the wicked Vajjians also met and held a schismatical council, which was called, from its being attended by ten thousand persons, the Great Council. At this many alterations were made in the original reduction of the *Pitaka*. They transposed *Suttas*, destroyed the meaning of both *Pitakas*, etc. ; ' Rejecting single passages of the *Suttas*, and of the profound *Vinaya*, they composed other *Suttas* and another *Vinaya* which had (only) the appearance' (of the genuine one). Then follow the details of certain changes which they made.

Such is the *Dipavansa* account of the Vesali Council; but it differs very widely from that in the *Culla Vagga*. The *Culla Vagga* knows of no great assemblies, either of heretics or orthodox. The ten points are the same, but the method of dealing with the difficulty is altogether different.

The points at issue were discussed at first among

individuals, and the description of this is most life-like and probable ; till, as we read (xii. 2, 7), 'The Community met together with the intention of inquiring into this legal question.' The Community here is not a general convention of the whole body of monks, but the local Community. Having met together, it proceeded to follow (as Professor Rhys Davids has pointed out) the rules laid down in Culla Vagga, iv. 20, for the appointment of a committee, and by that committee the matter was decided.

These proceedings were not only not a council like that at Rajagaha, or like that which we may suppose to have been attributed to Asoka, but they obviously did not constitute a council at all. It was an application of the ordinary rules of business to a local dispute.

Nor is there any indication in the body of the chapter (Culla Vagga, xii.) in which all this is recorded, that it was regarded as an occasion parallel in dignity to that ascribed to Rajagaha. There is no hint in the body of the chapter that the Vinaya was recited at all.

At the end of the chapter occurs the sentence—quite out of keeping with what has preceded—'Whereas at this rehearsal of the Vinaya seven hundred Bhikkus, without one more, without one being wanting, took part, therefore is that rehearsal of the Vinaya called that of the seven hundred.' This is an exact repetition of the last sentence of the previous chapter, which says the same—only with five hundred instead of seven hundred—of the rehearsal at Rajagaha. It is impos-

'sible to repress the suspicion that this sentence was a very much later addition, added to the chapter after the idea of a series of councils had arisen, to bring the Vesālī proceedings into line with the Council of Rajagaha.

Now in this collision of authorities, in which the Dipavansa, compiled in Ceylon in the fourth century A.D., is in conflict with the canonical book, the former has no weight ; and the earlier authority, except in the closing sentence, on which I have just commented, does not allude to any sort of recension of the canon. In short, as Dr. Oldenberg says, 'the tradition of the Second Council in its authentic form, does not bring this council into any authentic relation with the sacred books.'

Dr. Oldenberg adds, that the tradition 'is historical.' To what extent ? Not as a history of a council ; that it is not, but as the history of certain special and local proceedings. .

It is very gratifying to me to find that my view of these matters does not, so far, differ widely from that expressed by Professor Max Müller, in his valuable Preface to volume x. of *Sacred Books of the East*, a preface which, I am rather ashamed to confess, I had not studied when I wrote this chapter. He ends with the words : 'To my mind all dates beyond Candragupta are purely tentative, resting far more on a chronological theory than on actual tradition ; and though I do not doubt the historical character of the Council of Vaisali, I look upon the

date assigned to it, on the authority of the Dipavansa and Mahavansa, as, for the present, hypothetical only.'

We have not arrived yet at any intimation of a date by which the books had been compiled, nor have we come across a council.¹

From what has been alleged, the conclusion seems to follow that the whole idea of a series of councils was late. That idea was not, perhaps, even in the Sinhalese Chronicles, used exactly with the meaning which the word is liable, from association of the word with the councils of Christendom, to call up in European minds. But the belief that there had been a series of recensions did certainly arise. To which facts was it due?

Certainly not to a Council of Rajagaha having been succeeded by a Council of Vesali. No historian believes in the first; and the second was not a council. Professor Oldenberg believes that the account of the Vesali proceedings is substantially historical; and that the Rajagaha assembly is a fictitious double of it. But how should the idea of a *series of sangitis* arise out of one event to which that title hardly applies? What was the genuine fact of which these are the reflection?

¹ Even in the concluding sentence no word is used which necessarily means a council. The word Sangiti, popularly rendered council, bearing that meaning at a later date (Dhātusena made a Pitaka Sangiti *Mahavansa*), meant only, in the days of the Pitaka compilation, what Rhys Davids cautiously renders it, a 'rehearsal.' It means, properly, chanting together, as he renders it in the account of the Rājagaha assembly. In the Maha Vagga, iv. 15. 3, Vinaya Sangiti is used, not of any council, but of an annual recitation; in Culla Vagga, x. 17, it seems to mean the formula recited.

The answer is, The council held in Asoka's days, and commonly called the Council of Patna.

The Sinhalese traditions, on which the chroniclers and Buddhaghosha drew, utterly 'untrustworthy as they are in regard to events of the fourth or fifth century B.C., had certainly good information in regard to Asoka. Their statements about him are borne out by his own inscriptions, and by the relic-box of Majjhima, to an extent which leaves no doubt of their veracity. It is therefore incredible that they should not have known whether there was held in his time a council for the recension of the sacred books or not. They say there was. There is nothing to account for their saying so except the fact.

The Dipavansa account of this 'Third' Council is as follows :

'In order to destroy the infidels, many disciples of Buddha, sixty thousand sons of the Jina, assembled. At that convocation, the son of Moggali (Moggali-putta) was the president. The presiding Thera, in order to purify his own doctrine, and to establish the faith for a long time, selected one thousand Arahats, choosing the best ones, and held a council. In the monastery of the Asokaráma, which had been built by king Dhammasoka, the third convocation was finished in the space of nine months.'¹

It is not mentioned in his Edicts. The last one is addressed, it is true, to the Community of

¹ *Dipavansa*, vii. 50, 51, 57, 58, translated by Dr. Oldenberg.

Magadha.¹ But that expression means the local Community. It says nothing whatever about their being assembled. But his addressing them as a body is obviously compatible, and something more than compatible, with their being assembled on some special occasion.

But there are grounds much safer than this for inferring from the Edicts that something like a recension of the sacred books took place.

In the earlier Edicts, although the king appears as the advocate of Buddhist principles, the technicalities, the books, the names of Buddhism are conspicuous by their absence. But as his reign goes on the definiteness of his Buddhism increases, till in the latest Edicts he uses technical language, specifies particular books or discourses, and says—in words which might be taken from the *Anguttara Nikāya*—that all that was said by the Buddha was well said.

Does not this agree with the intimation, which reaches us from other sources, that during his reign something was done towards the arrangement and formulation of the Buddhist literature? That it existed in its completeness at any time during his reign, I find it difficult to believe. Professor S nart, who has studied his Edicts so closely, declares that he cannot have known the *Tipitaka*. Strange indeed

¹ Professor S nart suggests that by 'Magadha Community' the king meant the Buddhist Community in general. His reason for the suggestion is, the improbability of the king's publishing in the far North-west a letter to the local community of Bihar. But the meaning thus assigned to the words seems even more improbable.

would it be, if he did know it, that he should not have named it.

In Asoka's day, then, as I conclude, the mass of the Buddhist literature began to be arranged. Possibly within his reign this was accomplished. The addition of the Abhidhamma may have been definitely made within the lifetime of Moggaliputta. Possibly Mahinda carried over our present Three Pitakas to Ceylon (see note at end of this chapter), or it may have been still many years before the process was completed. But that it was completed before Asoka's reign, or before India had felt that Græco-Buddhist impulse, of which Asoka is the impersonation—this will not long be believed.¹

For the Ceylon Chronicles I have much respect, but I cannot trust them for the time before Buddhism was introduced. There was no one, by their own showing, likely to have kept records before that date.

From the time of Mahinda's arrival the monks of Anuradhapura kept, I suppose, pretty continuous records; and Mahinda had brought them genuine traditions of the Buddha's time, and some recollections of recent events in India. All about Asoka, and a little about his father, and that his dynasty began with his grandfather—this they knew,—it belonged to the surroundings of the centre and source of their enlightenment. It is no blame to the Ceylon authorities that they 'could not remember before they were born.' From the time when

¹ See the Note on p. 307.

Buddhism was introduced into the island, they evidently kept records of considerable merit; but for what they tell us of earlier times they must have drawn on imagination. To this source I attribute the lists of kings between Ajátasattu and Candagutta, and the list of elders between Kassapa and Moggali. These are very circumstantial, but certainly inconsistent with one another; they have, I think, no ascertainable value.

And if it be asked, May not Mahinda have brought over correct records of the past history of Buddhism in India? I reply, first, that there is no evidence that he did; and, secondly, that it is extremely improbable that records of Buddhism as a whole were kept in the early days of Buddhism. We do not find in the sacred books much indication of a centralised system; the idea of a single centre was the growth of later times, called out by divisions, and the necessity of meeting them.

Nor was there in India, apart from Buddhism, the habit of keeping such records. The means for doing so were wanting. Only events, which could be commemorated in verse, could be recorded before writing was known. The names of kings, and the length of the reign of each are not of this nature. A memorial verse filled with the names of kings could not be made, since there would not be names enough to make a verse, till four or five kings had died; by which time the regnal years, if not the name, of the first of them must have been forgotten.

